



WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF OUR SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER!

We will use this publication to keep you up-to-date, so please share with your networks of parents, teachers, staff, and student groups.



## FEATURED TOPIC: COMPLIANCE WITH CALIFORNIA STATE LAWS AT SCHOOLS

The state of California has passed several laws in recent years that are focused on proper disposal of recycling, compost, and garbage. Here we will give an overview of the laws that concern schools, and how to be compliant.

**AB 341 (already in effect):** Otherwise known as the Mandatory Commercial Recycling Law, AB 341 requires that commercial businesses (including schools) generating more than 4 cubic yards of waste per week arrange for recycling services. The purpose of this law is to prevent valuable natural resources from sitting in a landfill, and to avoid greenhouse gas emissions.

**AB 1826 (already in effect):** Otherwise known as the Mandatory Commercial Organics Recycling Law, AB 1826 requires commercial sites generating 4+ cubic yards of waste per week to compost their organic waste. This is for several reasons - Californians send 30 million tons of waste to landfills every year, and about 30% of that waste could be composted, according to state agency CalRecycle.

Additionally, when organic material sits in landfills, it breaks down very slowly and without access to oxygen. This process produces large amounts of methane gas, a greenhouse gas that traps heat in the atmosphere and contributes to climate change.

**SB 1383 (regulations and fines effective in 2022):** Otherwise known as the Short-Lived Climate Pollutants Law, SB 1383 establishes targets for reducing methane emissions in the state of California. The law aims to reduce organic material disposed of in landfill by 50% by 2020 (this year!) and by 75% by 2025. Under this law, **the state will have the power to fine non-compliant sites.** We can help you become compliant!

**Read more here:**

- **AB 341:** <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/recycle/commercial>
- **AB 1826:** <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/recycle/commercial/organics>
- **SB 1383:** <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/climate/slcp>

# WHICH PLASTICS CAN BE RECYCLED?



This is one of the most frequently asked questions our Outreach team gets: which plastics can I actually recycle? We have had to change our rules recently to align with what is happening with global plastics markets. In 2017 China, who was processing much of America's plastic and paper, passed the National Sword Policy. This policy enforced near-perfect standards or outright bans on materials being sold to China, which prevented many recyclers from selling to them.

As a result, American recyclers had to look for other foreign markets to take plastic and paper off their hands, because we do not have the domestic capability at this time to process it here. Countries such as Malaysia, Vietnam, and Indonesia were inundated with plastics, but lacked the ability to deal with it - these countries mismanage (burn, dump in open sites, or release to the environment) 55 - 85% of their own plastic waste.



*This photo shows plastic waste on a beach in Cambodia. It appeared in the article "Where does your plastic go? Global investigation reveals America's dirty secret" by the Guardian.*

This is why Marin Sanitary Service has started accepting far fewer plastics in the recycling: we want our plastics to be sold to reliable recyclers, and the plastics that we accept are currently being sold to China. Other cities might accept more plastic in their recycling streams, but just because you can collect, sort, and sell a recycling commodity does not ensure it gets responsibly handled.

We are asking our customers to remember three shapes for plastic recycling: we want **bottles, jugs, and tubs** - if it is not one of those shapes, it is garbage. Bottles would include water bottles, liter bottles of soda, drink bottles, etc. Jugs include clear milk or juice jugs with the handle, as well as colorful detergent or soap jugs. For tubs we would like butter and yogurt tubs.

Many customers look for a number on the bottom of plastic items - in reality, this number indicates nothing about recycling. Rather, the number tells you the type of plastic a product is made of. For this reason, we are messaging on bottles, jugs, and tubs.

Finally, we would like to encourage you to adopt a new motto: "If in doubt, throw it out." Wishcycling, or wishful recycling, does more harm than good. Wishcycled items can contaminate true recycling and get it rejected and landfilled, and makes it harder for us as your hauler to ensure high-quality recycling. So, make sure you are confident that what you are sorting is recyclable!

Questions? See the contact info below, or visit our website at [www.marinsanitaryservice.com](http://www.marinsanitaryservice.com)

## NEED ON-SITE SUPPORT?

Our Schools and Community Recycling Coordinator, Casey Fritz, is available for on-site evaluation, education, and training, as well as waste audits and walk-throughs to assess compliance with state laws.

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## KEEP IN TOUCH ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

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