RETHINKER
SPRING/SUMMER 2023 – FOR APARTMENT/CONDO RESIDENTS

REDUCING IS EASY!

According to a 2018 study by the U.S. EPA*, the average person generates 4.9 pounds of waste every day. On top of properly sorting materials into the recycle, compost, and garbage carts, we can all make small changes to reduce the amount of waste we produce. Here are some helpful tips!

1. **Refuse single-use cutlery.** Plastic utensils are not recyclable and are deemed contamination at the RethinkWaste facility. Bring your own reusable utensils and be sure to say “No utensils please!” when ordering takeout.

2. **Store your reusable bags in a convenient location.** A common issue with reusable bags is that we forget them when we’re out! Store your reusable bags in an easy-to-grab spot, such as near the front door, in a bag, purse, or in the car.

3. **Repurpose containers.** Containers you receive from takeout or from the store are incredibly versatile and can be used in creative ways. Use them to store food, pens, art supplies, or grow plants in them.

4. **Ditch plastic water bottles.** Plastic water bottles can be completely avoided if you have your own reusable water bottle.

5. **Rethink your purchases.** Ask yourself while shopping:
   - Do I already have this?
   - Do I need this?
   - Will I use it more than once?
   - Could I borrow or rent this?
   - Can I buy this secondhand?
   These questions will help in reducing unnecessary purchases.


This Rethinker issue brings you tips on how to reduce your waste, reminders on how to properly sort, and general program information.
If you're cleaning out your home for the season and have bulky items to dispose of, consider taking advantage of Recology San Mateo County's Bulky Item Collection! Two FREE Bulky Item Collections (BIC) are provided per calendar year to apartment and condo complexes (not per individual unit) from February 1 through December 31. Property Managers must call to schedule a BIC for the whole complex. Reach out to your Property Manager to inquire.

- When setting out BIC items, please continue to sort materials correctly (e.g. compostable materials in paper bags, cardboard in contained bundles, e-scrap separate from bagged items, etc.)
- For hazardous materials such as fluorescent lights, garden or household cleaning products, propane tanks, etc., you must schedule a drop-off appointment at smchealth.org/hhw-appt or call (650) 372-6200. Select hazardous materials can be brought to the Shoreway Public Recycling Center free of charge. For more information, visit RethinkWaste.org/PRC.

REMINDER: PLASTIC BAGS GO IN THE GARBAGE

- Plastic bags contaminate the recycling and jam the machines at the RethinkWaste recycling facility
- Facility workers have to go in and manually cut the plastic bags out
- Jams slow down our process, as we receive 540,000 pounds of recyclable material every day

TIP: Keep recyclables loose, not bagged! Contact your Property Manager for a free reusable “Recycling Buddy Bag,” which is a convenient way to transport your recyclables from your home to the blue bin.

STILL DON’T HAVE COMPOST SERVICES AT YOUR COMPLEX?

IT’S THE LAW! Senate Bill 1383, a statewide effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the amount of compostable material sent to landfills, is underway! Speak with your Property Manager to get in touch with Recology San Mateo County to set up service today!

If your complex has compost services, visit bit.ly/rethinkcompost or scan the QR code for a video on how to compost correctly.

For more frequent eco-tips and resources, follow us on social media or sign up for our bi-monthly electronic newsletter at RethinkWaste.org/Rethinker.