

COMPOSTING IS SMART BUSINESS.

What is your hotel, restaurant or other business doing with your food scraps? Its landscaping debris? Instead of throwing these items in the trash, consider composting them.

You've probably heard about it but what exactly is composting? Composting is nature's way of recycling. Microorganisms break down organic material – like yard trimmings and food scraps – into a dark, crumbly, soil-like amendment that can be used for gardening and landscaping.

Turn your waste into a valuable product.

Just like your recycling program, composting can save you money by reducing your waste disposal costs. Composting also can save your facility money by reducing your outdoor water bill and your chemical fertilizer and pesticide purchases.

Decide what to compost.

Before you get started composting, conduct a waste audit to determine what compostable material your business generates. For more information about conducting a waste

COMPOSTING PERMITS

You may not need a permit from DHEC in order to start composting.

Whether your facility uses an in-vessel composter or an outdoor system, if you plan to compost up to 5 cubic yards of material including food scraps, you will not need a permit. Additionally, your facility may compost up to 400 cubic yards of material without a permit, provided certain buffer requirements and conditions are met.

Although many businesses can use the compost they make, if you decide to sell your compost, it must meet certain quality standards. Those standards, along with other regulatory requirements can be found in R. 61.107-4 "Solid Waste Management: Compost and Mulch Production from Land-Clearing Debris; Yard Trimmings and Organic Residuals." Visit www.scdhec.gov/Agency/docs/lwm-regs/R61-107_4.pdf to view the regulation.

Call DHEC's Division of Mining and Solid Waste Management at 803-898-1367 if you have questions about the permitting process.

audit, see www.scdhec.gov/HomeAndEnvironment/Docs/waste_audit.pdf.

Depending on the system you choose, most organic material can be composted. The items listed in the box at the bottom of the following page can be added to any compost system.

Choose the composting system that's right for your facility.

Businesses of all sizes have a range of composting options.

IN-GROUND COMPOSTING

If you have outdoor space, traditional **in-ground composting** is an inexpensive way to compost food and landscaping debris. An open pile works great for landscaping debris, but if you are composting food scraps, consider enclosing your compost pile to keep pests away. Multi-bin systems are often used so you can compost new material while older compost matures.

IN-VESSEL COMPOSTING

In-vessel composting offers a quick, space-saving option for reducing food scraps. In-vessel composting involves enclosing compostable material in a container and controlling the temperature, moisture and aeration to produce finished compost rapidly.

In-vessel composters come in various sizes and styles and require less staff time to manage because the equipment turns or agitates the material for you. In-vessel composters can be expensive, but the cost savings associated with less food scraps and a valuable end product can offset the costs. To see examples of in-vessel composters, visit <http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/invesselcomposting.pdf>.

Regulations in South Carolina now allow businesses to send their food scraps, landscaping debris and other organic materials off-site for composting. Businesses in Charleston County may be able to participate in their commercial food scraps composting program. For more information, visit www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/solidwaste/food-waste-composting-information.htm.

Let us help you get started.

DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling (Office) provides free technical assistance to help facilities begin or expand green practices including composting. For additional information, call 1-800-768-7348.

Is composting right for your facility?

Answer the following questions to see if your business is ready to compost.

- Is there support from management and key staff for composting?
- Are there dedicated compost enthusiasts on staff?
- Is there someone who can manage the composting program?
- Does your facility already have a recycling program in place?
- Do you have a potential site for a compost system that is relatively flat and has access to water?
- Is there landscaping where finished compost could be applied?
- Could organic material easily be separated from trash or other recyclables?
- Do you know what types of organic material your business generates and how much?

If you answered “yes” to the questions above, your business is ready to compost. If you answered “no” to or are unsure about any of these questions, contact the Office at **1-800-768-7348** for help starting your composting program.

Collect and store your material efficiently.

Just like trash or recycling, create a plan to collect compostable material at your facility. Plastic or metal containers with a lid are ideal for storing food scraps until you are ready to compost them. Empty them daily so food doesn't start to smell.

Place containers in your kitchen and food preparation areas and make sure staff know what to put in them.

For landscaping debris, establish a location to store material until it's ready to be added to the compost pile. Be sure to break down larger debris such as tree limbs or trunks into smaller pieces first so they will compost quickly.

Spread the word about composting.

Regardless of which composting system you choose, select an employee to manage your composting program. Your composting manager can ensure that material is properly separated, collected and composted. You may need additional staff to operate your machine or manage your compost pile.

Educate your staff on what items should be composted and how. Incorporate composting into staff trainings and job descriptions to make sure everyone knows how to properly manage your organic waste.

FATS, OILS & GREASE

Your fats, oils and grease should be recycled, too. Contact your food supplier to see if they will take your used cooking oil for recycling. Companies in South Carolina also will take your unwanted fat and animal scraps. Use the Green Resource Index to find a rendering company that serves your area.

Visit www.scdhec.gov/HomeAndEnvironment/BusinessesandCommunities-GoGreen/SmartBusiness/What to learn more.

WHAT TO ADD TO YOUR COMPOST PILE OR BIN ...

GREENS

- Uncooked or cooked fruits and vegetables
- Breads and grains
- Coffee grounds and filters
- Grass clippings
- Tea bags (with the staple removed)
- Hair and fur
- Chicken, rabbit, cow and horse manure

BROWNS

- Dryer and vacuum cleaner lint
- Eggshells
- Nut shells
- Fireplace ash (from wood burning)
- Sawdust and untreated wood chips
- Hay and straw
- Yard trimmings (e.g., leaves, small branches, twigs)
- Houseplants and used potting soil
- Shredded newspaper and cardboard rolls

NOTES: Dairy products, meat, bones and seafood scraps require special management to ensure finished compost is pathogen-free. Non-organic material such as metal and glass should never be composted. You also should avoid composting diseased or infected plants, coal or charcoal ash and treated or painted wood.

