

Food and Yard Waste Diversion Guide for Businesses and Organizations

Effective **November 1, 2017** the Waste and Recycling Bylaw will require businesses and organizations to separate food and yard waste for diversion. The bylaw will require that you:

- Collect and store food and yard waste separate from garbage or recyclable materials.
- Ensure the collected materials are taken for composting or another means of diversion.
- Post clear signage on collection containers, showing what materials can be deposited in each bin.
- Provide information to employees and tenants on an annual basis, and to new tenants, including:
 - » The list of materials that are accepted and where they are collected.
 - » How to properly prepare and sort material for diversion.

Similar to recycling for businesses and organizations, The City sets the bylaw requirements for food and yard waste diversion. You have the flexibility and choice to seek out a food and yard waste collection company and decide the best way to offer and manage the service.

This guide explains step-by-step how to comply with the food and yard waste bylaw and implement a successful food and yard waste diversion program. For more resources and information about other changes coming, visit calgary.ca/businessrecycling.

Rethinking waste

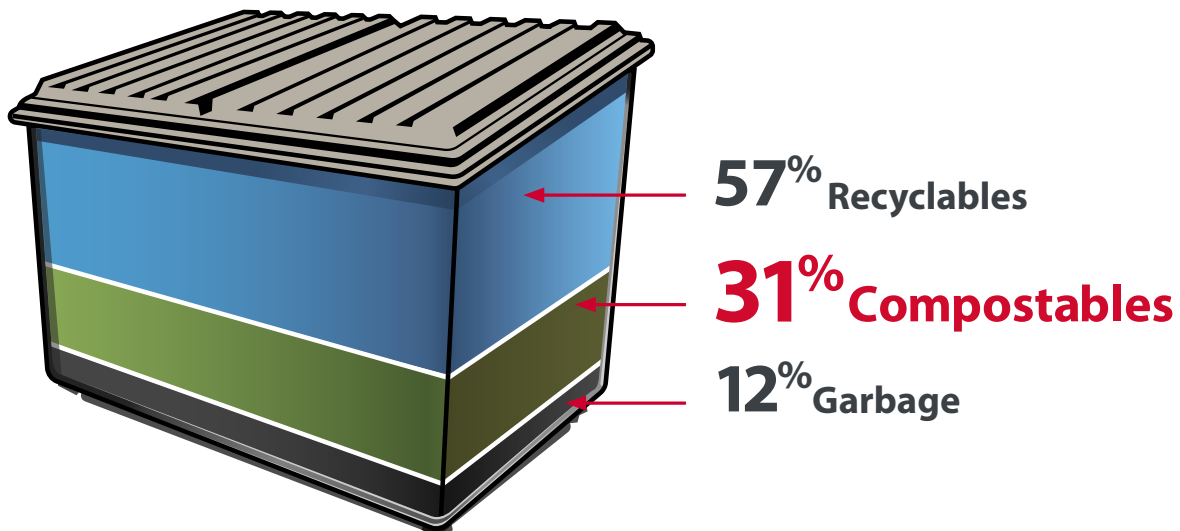
Food and yard waste makes up one third of the waste from businesses and organizations. Diverting this material is an important step to achieving our target of 70 per cent waste diversion by 2025.

Who's included?

Any business, company or organization that produces waste must comply with this bylaw.

This includes:

- » Offices
- » Stores
- » Schools
- » Malls
- » Restaurants
- » Hotels
- » Healthcare facilities
- » Manufacturers
- » Factories
- » Non-profit organizations
- » Places of worship
- » Warehouses
- » Community and Residents Associations
- » Other operations



Why is it important to divert food and yard waste from the landfill?

It's a common misconception that when food and yard waste goes in the landfill it becomes a part of the soil, but that's not what happens. Food and yard waste doesn't turn into soil, compost or anything useful when it's buried in the landfill because there's no oxygen. Instead, as it slowly decomposes it releases methane, a harmful greenhouse gas which contributes to climate change. It also creates leachate, a toxic liquid from garbage, which has to be collected and treated to protect the environment.

It's important to properly manage your business or organization's food and yard waste, just like you manage recycling and garbage. By diverting food and yard waste, we can reduce our dependence on landfills, minimize the harmful environmental effects of food and yard waste in landfills, and produce useful new resources, such as compost.

A number of initiatives over the next several years will affect how Calgary businesses and organizations manage their waste. For more information on these initiatives, please visit calgary.ca/businessrecycling.

What do I need to do?

There are four things to keep in mind for your food and yard waste program:

1. **Who will collect your food and yard waste** – page 3
2. **What materials your program must accept** – page 4
3. **Where and how to store your food and yard waste** – page 5
4. **How to inform your employees and tenants about the food and yard waste program** – page 7

“Waste diversion” is the separation of materials from the garbage, such as recyclables, food and yard waste, household hazardous waste and electronic waste.

Who's responsible?

The Waste and Recycling Bylaw places the responsibility on the owners of non-residential parcels. However, it is common for a lease or property management agreement to transfer the responsibility of waste management to another party. Make sure you know who is responsible at your business or organization.

Photo courtesy of Busch Systems



1. Who will collect your food and yard waste

Calgary businesses and organizations vary significantly in size and the kind of waste they produce. There's no "one-size-fits-all" solution. That's why your business or organization has the flexibility and choice to work with a food and yard waste collection company that best meets the needs of your business. Your business will be able to choose:

- How your food and yard waste will be collected.
- Where and how your food and yard waste is stored.
- How often your food and yard waste is collected.

See page 8 for tips on hiring a food and yard waste collection company.

Some businesses may be able to haul their own food and yard waste material directly to a food and yard waste processing facility. For information on processing facilities please contact:

- Alberta Recycling Hotline at recyclinghotline.ca or call 1-800-463-6326.

Photo courtesy of MEC



2. What materials your program must accept

All food (raw and cooked)	
Plate scrapings 	Eggshells and dairy products 
Meat, fish, shellfish and bones 	Jams, sauces and salad dressings 
Fruits and vegetables 	Pastries, cookies, cakes and muffins 
Bread, noodles, rice, beans and grains 	Nuts, seeds, chips, popcorn and candy 
Food soiled paper	
Paper plates and napkins 	Coffee filters and tea bags 
Yard waste	
Leaves 	Plants and weeds 
Branches and prunings 	Grass clippings and sod 
Fats, cooking oils and grease*	
	

Additional materials

Depending on your business or organization, there may be an opportunity to divert additional materials for composting if your collection company will accept it.

For example, a food service business may offer certified compostable foodware such as plates, cups, and cutlery to their customers. If so, they may choose to hire a hauler who can specifically accept this foodware for composting. Talk to potential collection companies about what they can accept in addition to the list of required materials.

If your business or organization provides compostable takeaway foodware, ensure it is certified compostable. This means the product will fully break down in a composting facility.

Check for these logos:



* Food service businesses are required to safely dispose of commercial quantities of fats, oils and grease. For more information talk to your collection company or visit calgary.ca/fog.

3. Where and how to store your food and yard waste

You will need to find a location to collect and store your business or organization's food and yard waste. If the storage location is convenient and accessible, your tenants are more likely to use it. One of the best ways to make sure that food and yard waste diversion programs are successful is by setting up convenient waste stations that are clearly marked and well maintained. (See pages 9 and 10).

How do I make sure the storage location is safe?

Fire code

Indoors

- » Food and yard waste containers should not block hallways, stairwells, doorways or any other area needed for a safe exit route from the building.
- » Material should not accumulate to the point where it creates a fire hazard. This should not be an issue as long as there is regular collection.
- » Service rooms (furnace, maintenance, sprinkler control, utility rooms) cannot be used to store food and yard waste or other waste materials.

Outdoors

- » Ensure outdoor storage receptacles do not create a fire hazard to surrounding buildings. For example:
 - » Place your bins in a secure area.
 - » Do not position bins under eaves, carports or building overhangs.
 - » Schedule regular pick up and/or call for immediate pick up if the bin is full.

If you have questions about whether your food and yard waste storage plans adhere to the Alberta Fire Code, contact 311 and ask for a general Fire inquiry.

Traffic flow

Your food and yard waste storage should not pose a safety hazard to users or impede the flow of traffic in or around your parking area.

Access to all waste containers

Food and yard waste containers should be accessible for all users, including people with disabilities or those who speak a different language. This will help encourage everyone to use the food and yard waste program, particularly when first introduced.

Your service provider should not have to move food and yard waste containers out of the way to reach other containers or vice versa. To make collection more efficient, there should be enough space for all containers to be collected safely and the area around the containers should be kept clean. Alternatively, talk to your service provider about a pullout service.

Do I need a development permit?

- » Most businesses and organizations should be able to find storage solutions that don't require renovations or permits. You can adjust the way garbage is stored within existing waste storage areas since your business should generate less garbage. For example, if you have two containers for garbage replace one with a food and yard waste bin instead.
- » A new or revised Development Permit may be required if any changes are made to the building, landscaping or parking. Contact 311 if you have any questions.

How do I prevent odours and pests?

Businesses and organizations should not expect to generate additional waste by diverting food and yard waste. This material currently goes in garbage containers, which means that pest and odour concerns specific to food and yard waste are already managed. Here are some tips to help reduce pests and odours:

- Use a sturdy food and yard waste container with a lid that prevents pests from entering the container.
- Keep the lids closed on food and yard waste containers. Put up a sign near the bin reminding users to close the lid after use.
- Decide if your main food and yard waste collection container uses a liner or not. You can line your container with newspaper, kraft paper bags, or compostable plastic bags, or not use a liner at all. Talk to your service provider about the liner options they offer or require.
- Arrange for increased collection frequency during periods of peak odour and peak usage, such as the summer.
- Consider storing meat and fish waste in freezers until collection day, especially during warm weather.
- Sprinkle a small amount of vinegar or baking soda in your food and yard waste container to minimize odour.

How do I clean food and yard waste containers?

- Depending on their size, some food and yard waste collection containers are easy to rinse outdoors. Make sure to pour the dirty water onto grass or gravel, not down the storm drain, as this water is not treated before reaching the river.
- If your employees or tenants use kitchen pails, encourage them to rinse these with hot water or place inside the dishwasher. Alternatively the janitorial staff could perform this service. Some service providers will clean your food and yard waste containers for you, if needed, or swap out the containers on collection days. Talk to your service provider for more information.



4. How to inform your employees and tenants about the food and yard waste program

Food and yard waste diversion may be a new program for your business. Employees and tenants need to be informed of the food and yard waste diversion opportunities available to them.

You will need to ensure that there is clear signage on the containers showing the materials that go in each bin. This helps tenants, employees and customers quickly understand what goes where.

You will also need to inform your employees and tenants of the food and yard waste materials that can be collected and the proper method for preparing and sorting waste material for collection.

This information needs to be shared at least annually, and with new employees or tenants. A letter template for tenants is available on calgary.ca/businessrecycling. See page 9 for education and signage best practices.

Photo courtesy of Oxford Properties



Tips – Hiring a collection company

Collection companies can be good resources for setting up your food and yard waste diversion program. Green Calgary maintains a directory of service providers that provide food and yard waste (organics) collection. We're also here to help – if you have questions about the upcoming changes, please contact 311.

Questions to ask

Here are some questions to consider when talking to a prospective collection company:

About the company

- What types of properties do you serve / specialize in?
- Will you provide a contract? May I see a sample? Would you sign a contract we create?
- Is there an automatic renewal clause in your contract?
- What will the service cost?
- How will I be invoiced?
- Will you help us determine if we have the right number and size of food and yard waste containers and give an opportunity to adjust if needed?

About the pick-up service

- Do you collect all of the materials that the bylaw requires? (See page 4 for the full list of materials required)
- Do you collect other items beyond this list?
- What kind of food and yard waste storage options do you offer? Are you able to be flexible about storage locations and container types?
 - » **Note:** You should invite the potential service provider to see available space at your building and talk about storage solutions.
- Do you provide food and yard waste containers (e.g. kitchen pails) for inside our building?
- Do you provide cleaning services for our indoor or outdoor containers?
- Do you provide paper bags or compostable bags to line the containers?
- Where do you take your food and yard waste after you pick it up? How must the material be prepared?
- How will the material be picked up?
- How often will you collect the material?

About additional services

- Will you provide signs, flyers or other support to help my tenants, employees and customers learn how to use the service?
 - » **Note:** Most collection companies will provide these resources. If not, you can find signage and other resources to help you at calgary.ca/businessrecycling.

Best practices for your food and yard waste program

Although not mandatory requirements, the following suggestions may help promote food and yard waste diversion at your business, encourage the proper use of bins and prevent contamination issues.

Setting up indoor waste stations

If you use indoor waste stations, group them together to be accessible and convenient, rather than individual bins scattered throughout the building. **An example from the Calgary Board of Education is shown below.**

Make sure the waste stations are accessible and clear to all users. To ensure everyone can participate in your program consider if users of the space have disabilities, speak a different language or have other barriers to using waste stations and address these barriers accordingly.

An example of an indoor waste station:

The bins are placed together so the recycling and food and yard waste containers are as accessible as the garbage container. This will help users choose the proper diversion option.

Signs with words and pictures help users quickly understand what goes where. You can find food and yard waste signage at calgary.ca/businessrecycling.

Colour coded bins help users understand what goes in each bin. Using blue for mixed recyclables and green for food and yard waste is a standard practice.



This station is in a **convenient location**, in a high use area. Consider the layout of your business and commonly used areas when figuring out where your waste station should be located.

This station is well maintained, neat and tidy.

Each bin has an **appropriate liner** to help custodial staff gather materials for collection. For instance, clear plastic bags could be used for the landfill, mixed recycling, and refundable beverage container bins while a **certified compostable liner** can be used for food and yard waste. Make sure to check with your collection company about which liners can be used for your waste diversion programs.

Setting up outdoor waste stations

If your employees, tenants, customers and/or custodial staff use outdoor collection bins, here are some tips to help them use the bins effectively:

- If the garbage and food and yard waste bins are not located in the same area, place a small garbage container and recycling container next to the food and yard waste bins. This helps reduce contamination as users have an opportunity to properly dispose of all materials.
- Make the food and yard waste area prominent and visible. Make sure users can recognize the area at a distance.
- Ensure the area is well lit and tidy.
- Use similar types of bins for storing food and yard waste. Consistency between the bins for food and yard waste, recycling and garbage reduces confusion about where food and yard waste belongs.

Promote your program

To set up your food and yard waste program for success, it's important to get buy-in from everyone in your business – including employees, custodial staff, tenant representatives and other occupants. Key information includes:

- Why it's important to divert food and yard waste.
- Where the food and yard waste bins are located.
- What can and cannot be put in the bins.
- How they should prepare food and yard waste.
- How to resolve common problems.
- Contact details for your collection company.
- Where to get more information. Provide an easy way for tenants and onsite staff to ask questions regarding the service.

If your business has a green team, give them this information so they can be ambassadors of your program. Tell customers and vendors about your food and yard waste program – it shows that your business cares about the community and environment.

Monitor your program and continue to educate

- Ask for feedback from custodial staff and people who use the program.
- Work closely with your food and yard waste collection company to monitor progress. Track your garbage, recycling and food and yard waste weights to monitor your diversion rate.
- Complete regular waste audits to monitor contamination issues and program success.
- Invite The City's education team to do a presentation at your workplace about food and yard waste diversion. Call 311 and reference Business Recycling - Presentations.
- The City has ready-made signage available for free to all businesses and organizations. Visit calgary.ca/businessrecycling.

Other topics

How can I reduce food waste?

Waste & Recycling Services is developing educational tools to support local businesses and organizations in preventing food waste. Consider the following ideas to reduce food waste in your organization:

Source Reduction:

Reduce the amount of food residuals being generated at the source. This includes menu planning, purchasing wisely, smart storage practices, and tracking waste on an ongoing basis.

Redirection: Donate high-quality additional food to people in need. Contact a local social service agency for more information.

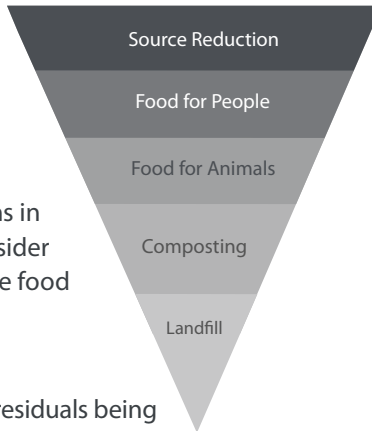
Feeding Animals: Food that isn't suitable for human consumption (such as vegetable peelings) can be used for agricultural purposes. Try connecting with a local farm that might be able to use your leftovers to feed their livestock. Please call 311 if you have any questions about food waste prevention, and stay tuned for future updates.

How do I reduce illegal dumping?

To reduce the likelihood of illegal dumping, consider:

- Storing your containers inside the building or an enclosure.
- Locking containers stored outside between collections.
- Storing containers in well lit areas close to your building.

Talk to your service provider about additional options they may have.



How will this be enforced?

The bylaw is in effect as of November 1, 2017. If your business does not have a food and yard waste program in place after November 1, 2017, the first step is for The City to help you become bylaw compliant. If there is still no compliance, the property owner(s) could be subject to a fine.

What other changes are coming up?

Check calgary.ca/businessrecycling for information about other future changes, such as increased fees at landfills for loads containing food and yard waste.

Where can I get more information?

Visit calgary.ca/businessrecycling for:

- Waste audit tool kits and calculators
- Free signage
- Educational materials
- Free workplace presentations
- Professional advice from City staff to help start or improve your food and yard waste program
- Subscription to email updates about waste diversion for businesses and organizations

If you have a question that hasn't been answered here, contact 311 and reference Business Recycling.