

## **SOLID WASTE TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

**AEROBIC:** Organic waste decomposition in the presence of oxygen in the process of composting.

**AERATE:** To expose to or mix with air.

**ALGAL BLOOM:** Population explosion of algae in surface waters; are associated with nutrient-rich runoff from compost facilities or landfills.

**ANAEROBIC DECOMPOSITION:** Organic waste decomposition in the absence of oxygen, bacteria that breathe inorganic oxidants contribute to the process resulting in a methane gas release.

**BALEFILL:** A landfill that only accepts waste that has been baled.

**BALER:** A machine used to compress recyclables or waste into bundles to reduce their volume; often used on newspapers, plastics, corrugated cardboard, and other recyclables.

**BIODEGRADABLE:** A property of a substance or material which allows it to be broken down into a simple stable compound (e.g. water and carbon dioxide) by microorganisms and other decomposers such as fungi.

**BOTTLE BILL:** A law requiring deposits on beverage containers (see Container Deposit Legislation).

**BROWNFIELD:** Abandoned or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contaminations. Land that is more severely contaminated and has high concentrations of hazardous waste or pollution, such as a Superfund or hazardous waste site, does not fall under the brownfield classification.

**BUFFER ZONE:** Neutral area which acts as a protective barrier separating two conflicting forces; an area which acts to minimize the impact of pollutants on the environment or public welfare. For example, a buffer zone is established between a composting facility and neighboring residents to minimize odor problems.

**BULKING AGENT:** A material used to add volume to another material to make it more porous to air flow. For example, water treatment sludge may act as a bulking agent when mixed with municipal solid waste.

**BULKY WASTE:** Large items of refuse including, but not limited to, appliances, furniture, and auto parts, which cannot be handled by normal solid waste processing, collection and disposal methods.

**BUY-BACK CENTER:** A facility where individuals bring recyclables in exchange for payment.

**BURN BARREL:** A container used for open burning of waste.

**BUY-BACK CENTER:** A facility which can collect recyclables in exchange for payments.

**CAUSTIC:** Able to corrode, dissolve, burn, or be eaten by means of a chemical.

**CLASS A SOLID WASTE FACILITY:** A commercial solid waste facility which handles an aggregate of between 10,000 and 30,000 tons of solid waste per month. Class A facility includes two or more Class B solid waste landfills owned or operated by the same person in the same county, if the aggregate tons of solid waste handled per month by such landfills exceeds 9,999 tons of solid waste per month.

**CLASS B SOLID WASTE FACILITY:** A commercial solid waste facility which receives, or is expected to receive, an average daily quantity of mixed solid waste equal to or exceeding 100 tons each working day, or serves, or is expected to serve a population equal to or exceeding 40,000 persons, but which does not receive or is expected to receive solid waste exceeding an aggregate of 10,000 tons per month. Class B solid waste disposal facilities do not include construction/ demolition facilities: Provided, that the definition of Class B facility may include such reasonable subdivisions or sub classifications as the director may establish by legislative rule proposed in accordance with legal provisions.

**CLASS C SOLID WASTE FACILITY:** A commercial solid waste facility which receives, or is expected to receive, an average daily quantity of mixed solid waste of less than 100 tons each working day, and serves, or is expected to serve a population of less than 40,000 persons. Class C solid waste disposal facilities do not include construction/demolition facilities.

**CLASS D SOLID WASTE FACILITY:** Any commercial solid waste facility for the disposal of only construction/demolition waste and does not include the legitimate beneficial reuse of clean waste concrete/masonry substances for the purpose of structural fill or road base material.

**CLOSURE:** The termination of the active life of a waste management unit by either:  
1) installation of a final cover, or 2) removal of all waste and contaminated soils and containment devices.

**COMMINGLED RECYCLABLES:** Mixed recyclables that are collected together after having been separated from mixed municipal solid waste.

**COMPACTOR:** Power-driven device used to compress materials to a smaller volume.

**COMPOSTING:** The controlled decomposition of organic materials such as leaves, grass, and food scraps by microorganisms. The result of this decomposition process is compost, crumbly, earthy-smelling, soil-like material.

**CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION (C&D) DEBRIS:** This includes materials from construction projects, remodeling, repair jobs, demolition of buildings, bridge construction, pavement, roofing, and other activities. Materials include concrete, asphalt, wood, metals, and drywall (gypsum wallboard, sheet rock, or plaster). Some tribes and states regard land clearing debris such as stumps, rocks, and dirt as C and D debris.

**CONTAINER DEPOSIT LEGISLATION (Bottle Bills):** Laws that require monetary deposits to be levied on beverage containers. The money is returned to the consumer when the containers are returned to the retailer.

**CONVENIENCE CENTERS:** Drop-off sites for community waste and/or recyclables; typically consist of one or more bins for waste and/or recyclables and are located at spots convenient for residents, such as near major roads or at shopping centers or community centers.

**CORRUGATED CARDBOARD:** Heavy paper board sculpted into a series of ridges and groves.

**CROSS-MEDIA TRANSFER:** Refers to the transfer of hazardous materials and wastes from one environmental medium to another.

**CURBSIDE COLLECTION:** Waste or recyclable materials are collected at the curb, often from special containers, and then taken to various processing facilities.

**CULLET:** Scrap glass that is usually used to make new glass.

**DETINNING:** Recovering tin from "tin" cans by a chemical process which makes the remaining steel more easily recycled.

**DIOXIN:** One of the most toxic man-made chemicals also known as tetra chloroform of a family of compounds.

**DIVERSION RATE:** A measure of the amount of waste material being diverted for recycling compared with the total amount that was previously thrown away.

**DROP-OFF COLLECTION:** Waste, recyclable, or compostable materials are “dropped off” at collection sites and then deposited in designated containers.

**END-USE MARKET:** A company or other entity that purchases recycled materials for use as feedstock in manufacturing new products.

**ENTERPRISE FUND:** A fund for a specific purpose that is self-supporting from the revenue it generates.

**EUTROPHICATION (OR CULTURAL EUTROPHICATION):** Aquatic ecosystem over nourishment of plant nutrients; a natural process for the most part, but affected by agriculture, urbanization, and industrial discharge.

**FARM DUMP:** Refers to the placement of farm waste such as old equipment, household garbage, fence posts and wire, etc. on the farmer’s property in an open pile.

**FLOW CONTROL:** A legal or economic means by which waste is directed to particular destinations. For example, an ordinance requiring that certain wastes be sent to a landfill is waste flow control.

**FLY ASH:** The residual particles (noncombustible) from the combustion process carried by air and smoke.

**GENERATOR:** Any entity (governments, companies, communities, tribes, etc.) that produces solid waste. Generators are usually divided into the following types: 1) Residential – single or multi-family households; 2) Commercial – offices, retail and wholesale outlets; 3) Institutional – social, educational or charitable activities; and 4) Industrial – industrial processes or manufacturing operations.

**GENERATION RATE:** Amount of solid waste that is produced over a given period of time. For example, a community that produces 1,600 tons of waste per year and has a population of 2,000, will produce waste that amounts to 4.4 pounds per person, per day.

**HAZARDOUS WASTE:** A substance which has potential to cause illness or death and, if not properly managed, may substantially threaten the environment and human health.

**HIGH GRADE PAPER:** Relatively valuable types of paper such as computer printout, white ledger and tab cards; also used to refer to industrial trimmings at paper mills that are recycled.

**HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE:** Leftover or unused consumer products used in and around the home that contain hazardous components, including certain paints, cleaners, stains and varnishes, car batteries, motor oil, and pesticides. Certain types of household hazardous waste have the potential to cause physical injury to sanitation workers, contaminate septic tanks or wastewater treatment systems if poured down drains or toilets, and present hazards to children and pets if left around the home. While residents do not have to separate household hazardous waste from trash under federal law, some states and localities have special disposal requirements for this waste.

**HUMUS:** Organic materials resulting from decay of plant or animal matter; also referred to as compost.

**INCINERATOR:** A furnace for the routine burning of waste materials using controlled flame combustion.

**INORGANIC WASTE:** Waste composed of matter other than plant or animal (i.e. contains no carbon).

**IN SHED:** Waste generated from sources within the wasteshed in which the solid waste disposal facility is located.

**INTERMEDIATE PROCESSING CENTER (IPC):** Usually refers to the type of materials recovery facility (MRF) that processes residentially collected mixed recyclables into new products available for market; often used interchangeably with MRF.

**IN-VESSEL COMPOSTING:** A composting method in which the compost is continuously and mechanically mixed and aerated in a large, contained area.

**INTEGRATED SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT:** A solid waste management system composed of planning, financing, regulating, operating, and managing processes. The system includes the reduction of solid waste generation (source reduction), collection, transfer, materials recycling, composting, combustion (incineration or waste-to-energy), and disposal. EPA defines the system as a process for managing solid waste and materials diverted from solid waste through combustion of any of the following four methods of management: source reduction, recycling, combustion, and land-filling.

**LANDFILL:** Any solid waste facility for the disposal of solid waste on or in the land for the purpose of permanent disposal. Such facility is situated, for the purpose of this rule in the county where the majority of the spatial area of such facility is located.

**LEACHATE (“Landfill Tea”):** Liquid that has percolated through solid waste or another medium and has extracted, dissolved or suspended materials from it which may include potentially harmful materials.

**MAGNETIC SEPARATION:** A system to remove ferrous metals from other materials in a mixed municipal wastestream. Magnets are used to attract the ferrous metals.

**MANUAL SEPARATION:** The separation of recyclable or compostable materials from waste by hand sorting.

**MATERIAL RECOVERY FACILITY (MRF):** A specialized plant/facility that receives, separates and prepares recyclable materials for marketing to end-user manufacturers.

**MECHANICAL SEPARATION:** The separation of waste into various components using mechanical means, such as cyclones, trommels, and screens.

**MEDICAL WASTE:** All wastes from hospitals, clinics, or other health care facilities that contain or have come into contact with diseased tissues or infectious microorganisms. Medical waste include human blood and blood products, pathological waste, discarded sharp instruments (e.g. needles, lancets, scalpels, broken medical items), and contaminated animal products. The waste is referred as “red bags” due to the red-colored bags in which it is discarded.

**MULTIMEDIA:** Refers to all environmental media (air, land, and water) to which a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant may be discharged, released, or displaced.

**NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE:** A resource that cannot be replenished into its original form naturally.

**OPEN BURNING:** The uncontained burning of solid waste in a pit, pile, container, or open dump.

**OPEN DUMP:** An uncovered site used for disposal of waste without regulation or environmental controls; it must meet the Subtitle D municipal solid waste landfill standards.

**ORGANIC:** Derived from living organisms, or any compound containing carbon.

**OUT OF SHED:** Waste generated from sources outside the wasteshed in which the solid waste disposal facility is located.

**PACKAGING:** Protective wrapping or sealing of products but is not of use to the actual product itself.

**PACKAGING MATERIALS:** Any variety of materials used as a protective covering for commodities (e.g. papers, cardboards, metals, wood, paper board and plastics).

**PAPER:** Matted or felt sheets of fiber (wood pulp, rags, straw, and other fibrous material) created on a fine screen from a water suspension.

**PAPER BOARD (OR CARDBOARD):** Most commonly made from recycled paper and used for cereal boxes etc.

**PARTICIPATION RATE:** A measure of the number of people participating in recycling program compared to the total number that could be participating.

**PAY-AS-YOU-THROW (PAYT) PROGRAM:** A waste and recyclables collection program that provides a financial incentive to reduce, reuse, and recycle waste by charging residents for hauling and disposal costs based on the amount of garbage is thrown away.

**PERCOLATION:** Downward flow of water through the pores and spaces of soil and permeable rock.

**PLASTICS:** Man-made material mostly consisting of Polymers; used in addition with other organic and non-organic compounds as fillers, coolants, stabilizers and other ingredients.

**PLASTIC FOAM:** Plastic that foams during the forming process resulting in the light weight plastic used for trays, boxes, fast-food, and packaging 'peanuts' etc.

**POLLUTION CONTROL RESIDUALS:** End products of the thermal process which includes hot combustion gases composed primarily of nitrogen, carbon dioxide, water vapor (flue gas) and noncombustible residue (ash).

**POST-CLOSURE CARE:** The monitoring of a closed waste management unit to verify that unacceptable releases from the unit are not occurring.

**POST CONSUMER MATERIAL:** Any product that has served its original purpose.

**POLLUTION PREVENTION (P2):** The use of materials, processes, or practices that reduce or eliminate the creation of pollutants or wastes at the source. It includes practices that reduce the use of hazardous materials, energy, water or other resources, and practices that protect natural resources through conservation or more efficient use.

**POLYSTYRENE (PS):** Clear plastic or stiff foam (more durable) composed of hydrogen and carbon atoms made from a by-product of petroleum and natural gas distillation process.

**PUTRESCIBLE:** Organic matter partially decomposed by microorganisms and producing a foul smell.

**RECYCLING:** A series of activities that include collecting recyclable materials that would otherwise be considered waste and sorting and processing these recyclables into raw materials such as fibers; or manufacturing raw materials into new products.

**REUSE:** A process whereby a product is used more than once, either for the same purpose or for a different purpose. The reused products could be repaired, donated to charity and community groups, and sold. This process would reduce waste.

**RESOURCE RECOVERY:** A term describing the extraction and utilization of materials and energy from the wastestream. The term is sometimes used synonymously with energy recovery.

**RETENTION BASIN:** An area designed to retain run-off and prevent erosion and pollution.

**ROLL-OFF CONTAINER:** A large waste or recyclables container that fits onto a tractor trailer that can be dropped off and picked hydraulically.

**SECONDARY MATERIAL:** A material that is used in place of a primary or raw material in manufacturing a product.

**SEWAGE SLUDGE:** A semi-liquid residue that settles to the bottom of canals and pipes carrying sewage or industrial wastewaters, or in the bottom of tanks used in treating wastewaters.

**SITE REMEDIATION:** Treatment of a contaminated site by removing contaminated solids or liquids or treating them on-site.

**SOLID WASTE:** Wastes from residential, commercial, governments, and institutional sources, such as durable and non-durable goods, containers and packaging, food scraps, yard trimmings, inorganic wastes, and construction and demolition debris.

**SOURCE SEPARATION:** The segregation of specific materials at the point of generation for separate collection. Residents source separate recyclables as part of a curbside recycling program.

**SOURCE REDUCTION (OR WASTE REDUCTION):** Refers to any change in the design, manufacture, purchase, or use materials or products (including packaging) to reduce the amount or toxicity before these materials become municipal solid waste. Source reduction also refers to the reuse of products or materials.

**SPECIAL WASTES:** A non-regulatory term used by tribes to describe problem wastes typically generated by households that are not disposed in household garbage containers primarily due to their size or because of disposal restrictions. The most common special wastes include tires, furniture, bicycles, appliances and other white goods, and car batteries. Tires and lead-acid car batteries are examples of special wastes that might have disposal restrictions.

**SUPERFUND** - Common name for the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) to clean up abandoned or inactive hazardous waste dump sites.

**TIPPING FEE:** A fee for unloading or dumping waste at a landfill, transfer station, incinerator, or recycling facility.

**TIPPING FLOOR:** Unloading area for vehicles that are delivering municipal solid waste to a transfer station or incinerator.

**TIRE DERIVED FUEL (TDF):** A tire that is shredded and processed into a rubber chip ranging in size from 1 to 4 inches; depending on the requirements of the users, TDF may also be processed to remove bead and radial wires. TDF has an energy content ranging from 14,000 to 15,500 BTU per pound.

**TOPSOIL:** Top layer of soil containing the most nutrients.

**TRANSFER STATION:** A site of facility where waste materials are taken from smaller collection vehicles (or private vehicles) and placed in larger vehicles, including truck trailers, railroad cars, or barges for transport. Recycling and some waste processing also might take place at transfer stations.

**TUB GRINDER:** Machine to grind or chip wood wastes for mulching, composting or size reduction.

**UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK (UST):** A tank and any underground piping connected to the tank that has at least 10 percent of its combined volume underground.

**VARIABLE CONTAINER RATE:** A charge for solid waste services based on the volume of waste generated measured by the number of containers set out for collection.

**VECTORS:** Organisms that carry disease-causing pathogens.

**VOLUME REDUCTION:** The processing of waste materials so as to decrease the amount of space the materials occupy, usually by compacting or shredding (mechanical), incineration (thermal), or composting (biological).

**WASTEPAPER:** Discarded paper that can be recycled by grade if separated properly before entering the waste stream.

**WASTE REDUCTION:** Using source reduction, recycling, or composting to prevent or reduce waste generation.

**WASTE STREAM:** The total flow of solid waste from generators within the jurisdiction that must be recycled, reused, or disposed of.

**WASTE-TO-ENERGY (Gaseofication):** The process of burning solid waste to create energy in the form of steam or electricity.

**WASTEWISE:** It is designed to support local government efforts in residential solid-waste reduction and related climate change impacts. WasteWise communities will accept and recognize annual residential waste-reduction data, thereby expanding the scope of WasteWise. Communities will work with municipalities to decrease climate footprints by providing tools and resources to communities seeking economically viable solutions to reduce waste and curb greenhouse gas emissions.

**WATER TABLE:** Level below the earth's surface at which the ground becomes saturated with water.

**WETLAND:** An area that is regularly wet or flooded and has a water table that stands at or above the land surface for at least part of the year.

**WHITE GOODS:** Large household appliances such as refrigerators, stoves, air conditioners and washing machines.

**WINDROW:** A large, elongated pile of composting material.

**WOOD FIBER:** Stringy substance made from wood that keeps the ingredients that makes paper together. Also gives the paper its texture.

**WOOD PULP:** The combination of wood fibers to make paper and paper board.

**YARD TRIMMINGS (OR YARD WASTE):** Trimmings include grass, clippings, prunings, and other natural organic matter discarded from yards or gardens; tree stumps and brush could be considered as well.

## **FEDERAL STATUTES/LEGISLATION**

**CLEAN AIR ACT (CCA):** The Act is a federal law that requires EPA to set national health-based air quality standards to protect people and the environment against common pollutants, including ozone (smog), carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, lead, and particular soot. State governments must prepare clean-up plans to meet the health standards by a specific date. In addition, EPA sets national standards for major new sources of pollution including automobiles, trucks, and electric power plants. The agency is also charged with developing controls for major sources of such toxic pollutants as benzene.

**CLEAN WATER ACT (CWA):** The Act is a federal law that established the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States. It gave EPA the authority to implement pollution control programs such as setting wastewater standards for industry. The Act also continued requirements to set water quality standards for all contaminants in surface waters. Furthermore, the Act made it unlawful for any person to discharge any pollutant from a point source into navigable waters, unless a permit was obtained under its provisions. It also funded the construction of sewage treatment plants under the construction grants program and recognized the need for planning to address the critical problems posed by non point source pollution.

**COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE, COMPENSATION, AND LIABILITY ACT (CERCLA):** The Act, commonly known as *Superfund*, was enacted by Congress in 1980. This law created a tax on the chemical and petroleum industries and provided broad federal authority to respond directly to releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances that may endanger public health or the environment. Over 5 years, \$1.6 billion was collected and the tax went to a trust fund for cleaning up abandoned or uncontrolled hazardous waste sites. CERCLA established prohibitions and requirements concerning closed and abandoned hazardous waste sites; and established a trust fund to provide for clean-up when no responsible party could be identified.

**POLLUTION PREVENTION ACT (PPA):** Although the Act concerns hazardous wastes in particular, it encourages the source reduction of all waste types. Basically, the preferred method of preventing pollution is to reduce at the source the volume of waste generated and that reuse should be performed whenever possible.

**RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND RECOVERY ACT (RCRA):** The Act authorizes EPA to regulate hazardous waste generation, transportation, storage, treatment, and disposal. It also sets forth a framework for the management of non-hazardous solid waste. Amendments to RCRA in 1986 also authorized EPA to address environmental problems arising from underground storage tanks storing petroleum and other hazardous substances.

**Subtitle C** - The hazardous waste section of RCRA

**Subtitle D** - The solid, non-hazardous waste section of RCRA

**TOXIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL ACT (TSCA):** The Act, passed by Congress in 1976, requires that all chemicals produced or imported into the United States be tested, regulated, and screened for toxic effects. The Act requires that any chemical that reaches the consumer market be tested for possible toxic effects prior to commercial manufacture. Existing chemicals that pose health and environmental hazards are tracked and reported under TSCA. The management and disposal of asbestos and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are regulated under the Act.

**SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT (SDWA):** The Act is the main federal law that ensures the quality of drinking water. Under the Act, EPA sets standards for drinking water quality and oversees the states, localities, and water suppliers that implement those standards.