

Starting Your Program!

Setting up a food scrap recycling program at your business or organization requires the support of top management and all employees.

Gain support from upper management and staff members by highlighting the cost-effectiveness of food scrap recycling programs and added value to your business. Develop a food scrap recycling plan unique to your business' layout, size, and types and quantities of food scraps generated. Select a recycling collector/hauler that collects food scraps for recycling collection based on budget, collection schedule, and customer service provided. Purchase containers and supplies specific to your food scrap recycling efforts. Here are some suggestions:

Order different colored containers for recycling food scraps to make it easier for employees to participate. Food scraps are heavy. Order smaller-sized containers or containers with wheels to make it easier to move them around. Verify compostable liners are accepted by your food scrap recycling collector/hauler before ordering these supplies. Use these compostable bags to line your collection containers.

Purchase and use a scale to track the progress of your efforts by weighing the amount of food scraps your business is recycling. Use this data to complete your Annual Business Recycling and Waste Reduction Report for Montgomery County.

Promote the program, and be sure to report the results to your staff to keep them informed, enthusiastic, and involved in the process.

Ask staff for feedback and ideas to make improvements as needed. Remember to train all new staff and provide refresher training sessions to staff on a regular basis.

For more information on recycling food scraps and other materials, please visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/recycling.



Montgomery County, Maryland Division of Solid Waste Services Waste Reduction and Recycling Section

SORRT (Smart Organizations Reduce and Recycle Tons) Program

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This information is available in an alternate format by calling (240) 777-6480.

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Food Scrap Recycling At Your Workplace



Guidelines for Businesses and Organizations

Why Recycle Food Scraps?

Montgomery County, Maryland has a goal to reduce waste and recycle 70 percent of all waste generated in the County by 2020, and businesses play an important role in meeting this goal. The approximately 35,000 businesses operating in Montgomery County produce over half of all solid waste generated in the County. Based on the most recent waste composition study completed by the County, food scraps account for nearly 25 percent of the non-residential or commercial waste stream. By implementing a food scrap recycling program, your business or organization will help encourage the development of commercial food scrap recycling and composting facilities in the region and support increased access to food scrap recycling opportunities.

Saving your Business Money

Recycling food scraps may be cost-effective for your business since recycling collection is typically less expensive than trash disposal. Your business is not creating more waste — you are just separating food scraps and other biodegradable items into different containers for recycling collection. In the end, you may be able to reduce the amount of trash disposed by your business or organization, which may save money! Direct benefits to your business include:

- Potential for reduced waste collection and disposal costs.
- Improved corporate image through recognition as a green organization within your community.
- Increased employee pride in their workplace.
- Positive impact on Montgomery County recycling efforts.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I determine where food scrap recycling collection containers should be placed?

Food scrap recycling collection containers should be placed in areas where food is prepared or generated.

When and how frequently should food scrap recycling collection containers be emptied?

To avoid extremely heavy containers of food scraps, mark the food scrap recycling containers to designate the 80 percent full level. The bin should be emptied once this level is reached. The frequency will vary depending on the amount of food scraps your organization generates. Containers should be emptied as close to the end of the day as possible. Frequent collections will help reduce odors.

What happens to food scraps after they are collected?

Food scraps are recycled and processed into soil amendments and fertilizers. Food scraps can be placed in special containerized systems or in long piles called windrows. Over a period of time, microorganisms consume the organic matter and break down materials, resulting in compost. This material is high in nutrients, which are essential for the healthy growth of trees, plants, and flowers. Compost also reduces the need for commercial fertilizers. Adding compost to soil significantly improves the drainage of the soil, which reduces runoff from rain and melting snow.

Who do I contact if I have questions or need additional information/educational materials on recycling food scraps?

More information on setting up a food scrap recycling program for your business or organization can be found in the **SORRT** (Smart Organizations Reduce and Recycle Tons) **Business Recycling Regulation Handbook**. To download a copy of the Handbook or obtain additional educational materials such as posters, brochures, or labels, visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/recycling or call the Montgomery County Division of Solid Waste Services at **311** or **240-777-0311**.

What Food Scraps Can Be Recycled?

Check with your food scrap recycling collector/hauler in advance to verify the list of items they will and will not accept for recycling, as this may vary by collector and processing facility.

Generally acceptable materials that can be placed in your food scrap recycling collection container include:



Meats, Fish, and Bones



Coffee Grounds and Tea Bags



Fruits and Vegetables



Baked Goods



Breads, Grains, and Pasta



Compostable or Biodegradable Items (Bags, Utensils, Takeout Containers, etc.)



Dairy Products



Soiled Paper and Cardboard Products with Food

The following items should **NOT** be placed in your food scrap recycling collection container:

- Polystyrene/Styrofoam®
- Ash
- Chemicals such as bleach, detergents, or degreasers
- Batteries
- Non-compostable service ware
- Plastic wrap or non-compostable plastic bags

Reminder:

Mixed paper and cardboard should be placed in a separate mixed paper recycling container.

Aluminum cans and foil products, bi-metal (steel/tin) cans, glass bottles and jars, and plastic bottles, containers, trays, buckets, cups, and lids should be placed in a separate commingled materials recycling container.

