



Curb to Compost Toolkit

A Commercial Food Waste Composting Guide

Table of Contents

1

1

Introduction

- Background 2
- Why Compost? 3
- Food Recovery 4

2

Where to Start

- Best Practices 5
- Fatal Flaw 8
- How to Start 9
- Checklist 9

3

FAQs

10

4

Signage/Posters

11



A compactor truck full of food waste. Photo by Stephanie Minor.

Background

In 2017, Teton County's Road to Zero Waste Initiative and Subaru of America's Zero Landfill Initiative in National Parks, piloted a food waste collection program in Grand Teton National Park. This significant collaboration for Teton County, Wyoming recognized food waste as a key leverage point towards meeting the County's goal of 60% waste diversion by 2030. Grand Teton Lodge Company and Signal Mountain Lodge participated as pilot adopters and successfully diverted 247 tons of food waste from the landfill during the summer seasons of 2017, 2018, and 2019. Proceeding the conclusion of the food waste collection pilot program, the County is expanding its food waste collection program to restaurants and other food-producing entities.



Teton County Food Waste Collection Program

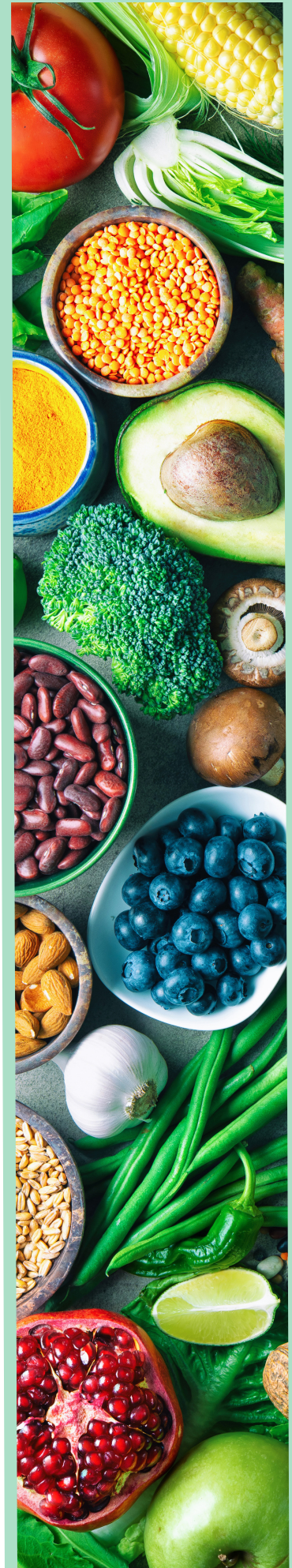
To ensure a successful and robust county-wide program, the Teton County food waste collection program will begin in 2022 with a small number of food producing entities. The implementation of this program will be a big step on the Road to Zero Waste. Most importantly, the program will collect food waste only. No items such as compostable to-go ware, paper or coffee filters will be accepted. As an early adopter, you can provide immense benefits to the growth of the program by ensuring clean food waste collection in your kitchen.

Why Compost

Composting at your business has many benefits:

1. **SAVE MONEY.** Separating food waste for collection can reduce your garbage hauling fees.
2. **HELP REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS.** In Teton County, landfilling food waste includes increased CO₂ emissions in transporting heavy loads to the landfill over 100 miles from town and increased methane production as food waste decomposes anaerobically in the landfill.
3. **CONTRIBUTE TO A MORE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY.** By composting your food scraps, you are helping to create a nutrient-rich soil amendment, which can replace synthetic chemical fertilizers on local farms, gardens, and landscaping.
4. **COLLECTING FOOD WASTE CAN RAISE COMMUNITY AWARENESS AROUND WASTED RESOURCES.** Recognizing the types of food waste can inform purchasing practices and increase efficiencies in your organization. Your business will also highlight the importance of food waste collection for other food producers while engaging employees and potentially customers in a commitment to sustainable practices.
5. **BE RECOGNIZED AS A GREEN BUSINESS.** People want to support businesses that do good for the environment. Participating in a compost program makes your business more attractive to customers, helping you to stand out for your green practices!

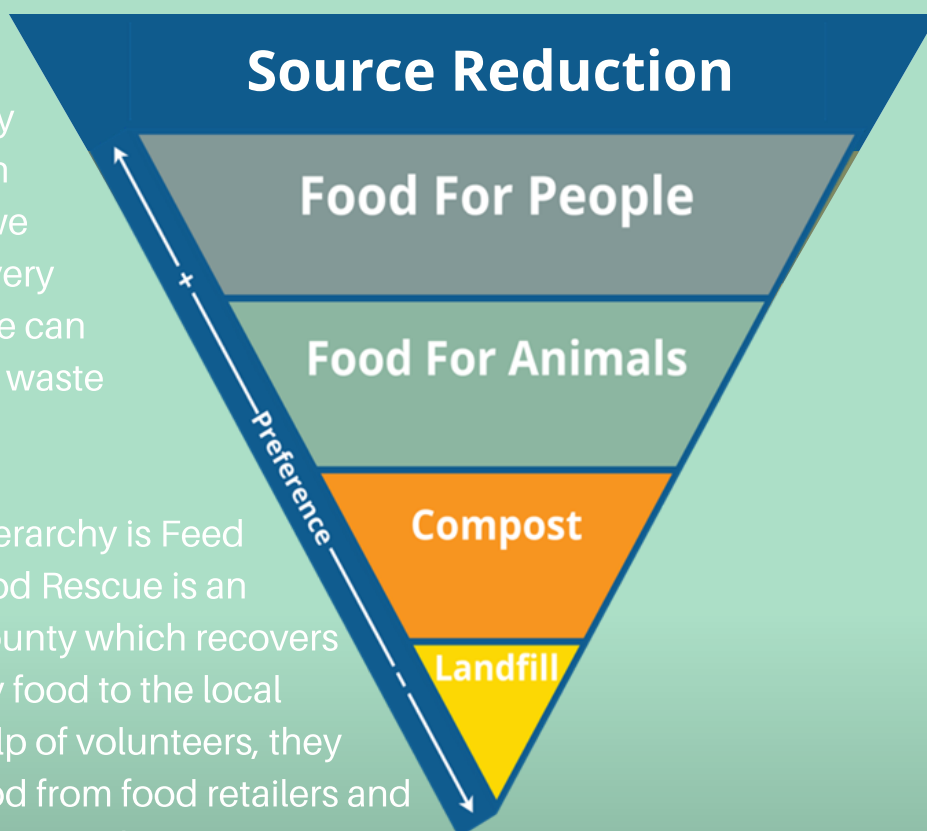
Food waste collection programs in restaurants and food-producing entities can have significant environmental, economic, and social benefits for the Teton County community.



Food Recovery

Composting isn't the only step to consider taking in reducing food waste. If we examine the Food Recovery Hierarchy, to the right, we can see a wide range of food waste reduction methods.

The second tier of the hierarchy is Feed Hungry People. Hole Food Rescue is an organization in Teton County which recovers and redistributes healthy food to the local community. With the help of volunteers, they collect landfill bound food from food retailers and redistribute it to feed people in the community. Any food left over is then fed to farm animals or composted.



What Does Hole Food Rescue Take?

| | Produce | Dairy | Grocery | Deli | Meat |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| YES <i>Please</i> | Good looking Edible | Less than 1 week expired | Packaged Canned | Before or on "sell by" | Frozen pre- expiration |
| NO <i>Thank you</i> | Moldy Extra bruised | More than 1 week expired | Opened Damaged | After "sell by" date | Frozen after expiration |

Questions?

Visit Online at
HOLEFOODRESCUE.ORG
 or contact Hannah at
 307.201.3010
HANNAH@HOLEFOODRESCUE.ORG



Best Practices for Food Waste Collection

Collect FOOD ONLY

- THIS INCLUDES ALL FOOD: meat, dairy, other animal products **except shellfish***, fruit, veggie scraps, grains, etc.
- STRAIN as much liquid from soups and other liquid-based foods.
- NO TO-GO WARE: even when compostable. Service ware leads to higher rates of contamination and a lower quality compost product.
- NO PAPER PRODUCTS: napkins, paper towels, paper straws, coffee filters, etc. are currently not accepted in the compost process and should be discarded as trash.
- SEE SECTION 4 for more information and printable signage/posters with common types of contamination.

* Shellfish includes but is not limited to the meat and shell/exoskeleton of: shrimp, lobster, clams, mussels, scallops, and oysters. Shellfish are not allowed in the Teton County Food Composting Program.

Thoughtfully Consider Interior Bin Placement & Size

- Many kitchens struggle with space. Think creatively about where and what size collection bins will fit in your facilities and that bins are conveniently located to make composting as easy as possible.
- Make it easy to accept food scraps. Place compost containers where food is prepared.
- Pair composting bins with garbage containers.
- Place a bin for food service gloves adjacent to the food waste collection bin.



Train Early and Often

- Include food waste collection training in the initial employee trainings.
- Retrain employees when any contamination is found in bins.
- Address food waste collection success and/or concerns in regular employee meetings or on break room announcement boards.
- Invite Teton County's Waste Diversion Outreach Coordinator to monthly staff meetings for training opportunities and to answer questions.

(307) 733-7678
ISWROUTREACH@TETONCOUNTYWY.GOV

Place Posters in Highly Visible Locations

- Place posters in high traffic areas to raise awareness and provide clear direction to food prep and cleaning teams.
- Make sure all bins have corresponding signs.
- Communicate with multilingual, simple, and accessible language and include images.

Printable signs/posters can be found in section 4 of the toolkit.

Establish a "Compost Champion"

- This will be the point person for food waste collection. It could be someone who already manages your business's waste and recycling services, someone who works closely with kitchen employees or someone who is passionate about waste reduction and sustainability.
- Responsibilities include:
 - Training
 - Monitoring
 - Communication with ISWR, management, and other employees about challenges and successes
 - Sharing a passion and commitment to waste diversion with kitchen employees and leading by example.





- The Compost Champion should regularly monitor collection bins, especially at the start of the program and with newly trained employees.
 - Check interior bins and external dumpsters for contamination with non-compostable items (e.g., plastic, gloves, to-go ware, paper products). Pull out these items to discuss with all staff and consider retraining.

It is very important to have support from upper management throughout the planning and implementation phases of your food waste composting program.

Empty and Clean Bins Often

- Empty kitchen compost containers regularly - food waste becomes heavy quickly.
- Expect to clean bins on a regular basis to avoid odors, vermin, and pests.
- While compostable bin liners are not ideal, they are accepted in the compost program. Please consider alternatives and only use compostable bin liners when necessary.

The Following Compostable Bag Brands are accepted

- ◻ Eco Products
- ◻ BioBag



Encourage Sustainability Efforts

- Creating a culture committed to sustainability can help increase commitment to food waste collection.
- Make it fun! Organize kitchen competitions and/or other incentives that maximize food waste diversion with zero contamination.
- Post progress on waste diversion (the amount of food waste collected weekly, monthly) in common areas or at an employee meeting.
- Consider sharing and celebrating your compost practices with the public.

Contamination is the Fatal Flaw of Food Waste Collection

The quality of the finished compost product is directly related to the material going into the process. When there is contamination in the food waste collected, it must be discarded as trash.



Chronic contamination could lead to fines and/or rejection from the program.

When in Doubt; Throw it OUT!

**CONTAMINATION
=
LANDFILL**



**CONTAMINACIÓN
=
VERTEDERO**

Si tienes duda, ¡tíralo a la basura!

One way to ensure a clean, safe compost product is by limiting acceptable materials to food only* in the early stages of a collection program. For those reasons, it is imperative that employees involved in any stage of the collection understand the do's and don'ts of food waste collection.

*Shellfish includes but is not limited to the meat and shell/exoskeleton of: shrimp, lobster, clams, mussels, scallops, and oysters. Shellfish are not allowed in the Teton County Food Composting Program.

How to Start



Contact ISWR

Contact Teton County Integrated Solid Waste & Recycling for service pricing, collection bin options, pick up schedules, and a starter toolkit. 307-733-7678 or ISWRoutreach@tetoncountywy.gov



Set Up Internal Collection Containers

Use buckets with labeling or totes that are green, so they stick out from trash receptacles. Pair compost containers next to the existing garbage and recycling and clearly label all waste containers. Place a compost container close to where food is handled (prep, cooking, and dish washing areas).



Hang Signs in Highly Visible Locations

Place posters in highly visible locations to raise awareness and provide clear directions to employees.



Designate a Compost Champion

Consider designating a few members or have one per shift to answer questions, encourage participation, and ensure quality by monitoring bins for contamination.



Train Employees

Explain to employees what can be included in the compost program by directly showing them and leading by example. Follow up with reminders in an email, newsletter, or meeting. During training, be clear on expectations. Explain the compost program to new employees as part of new employee training.



Continually Assess

Your compost champion is encouraged to conduct spot audits for contamination. Pull out items and discuss issues with employees. Make sure employees feel empowered to give feedback on food waste collection practices. Post food waste data so employees can see they are making an impact and set goals.

Checklist



Contact ISWR



Designate a Compost Champion



Purchase & Place Internal Bins



Train Employees



Hang Signs in Highly Visible Locations



Continually Assess

Frequently Asked Questions

10

Why should I recover food waste?

Rescuing food and redistributing it back into the community helps your neighbors and friends in need. What can't go to them can support farm animals that can then circle back to your table as food. What remains can then be composted and used in soil reclamation practices, preserving the landscape. Teton County, WY has a very distinct natural image and composting can support what we all love about this place.

How much food waste can I expect my site to produce?

This depends on your site. A good rule of thumb is to observe how much waste you are creating and envision about 35% of that being food waste. Don't forget that food waste is heavy! Consider smaller bins that need to be dumped more frequently to help staff safely lift and transport waste.

My site has bear and other wildlife concerns. How do I minimize wildlife encounters?

Maintain a clean and odor free environment by emptying bins regularly. Using compostable bin liners when you have to and washing bins regularly can also minimize potential odors and avoid attracting pests. All outdoor compost containers provided through the service are bear resistant.

Why is reducing contamination in food waste collection so important?

The food waste you are collecting will be turned into compost. This compost will be applied to fields, gardens, natural areas, and other spaces we would like to keep trash free. ISWR will reject any loads of food waste containing contamination. If a load is contaminated, all your hard work and work of those other participating organizations along your pickup route will go to waste.

How do I train my employees to learn this new diversion process?

Face-to-face communication is best. Learning on the go will be necessary. Signage placed in easy to view areas will help food waste collection go smoothly. Training and retraining will happen early and often until the majority of staff feel comfortable and can help train. Practice makes perfect! Contact ISWR to connect about employee training.

What do I do with compostable/biodegradable to-go ware and paper products?

In the early phases of Teton County's program, these items will NOT be accepted to minimize contamination.

What if my staff don't have the time to compost?

Composting requires minimal sorting time. Composting can be as simple as adding another container to the prep line for food only.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

Integrated Solid Waste & Recycling
Becky Kiefer
ISWR outreach@tetoncountywy.gov
307-733-7678 (main) 307-732-5769 (direct)



Recommended Compost Resources

Teton County Integrated Solid Waste & Recycling is here to help your business get started with a composting program that is simple and effective!

The following resources are available upon signing up for the Food Waste Composting Program.



Compost Posters



Bucket Decal



Compostable Bags
(upon request)

- EcoProducts
- BioBag



Compost Bucket



64 or 95 Gallon
Compost Bin

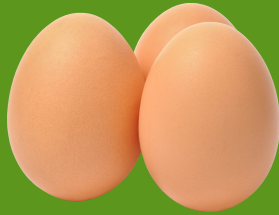


Food Waste Do's & Don'ts

YES



meat and bones



eggs and eggshells



vegetables and vegetable scraps



fruit and fruit scraps



cheese



spent grain

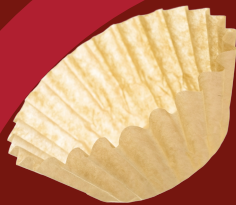


bread

NO



plastic food packaging



coffee filters



sugar/sauce packets



gloves



shellfish: meat and shells



egg cartons



produce stickers and rubber bands



paper products/napkins



plastic and compostable service ware, including cups, plates, & coffee cups



all liquids should be drained and soups strained

Food Waste ONLY



meat and bones



bread



cheese



eggs and eggshells



grain



vegetables and
vegetable scraps



fruit and fruit scraps

When in Doubt, Throw it OUT!

CONTAMINATION

=

LANDFILL



CONTAMINACIÓN

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