

Composting Facilities in Oregon

What are the regulations?

Background: Regulations for composting facilities were developed in response to odor and water quality problems. A compost work group, facilitated by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and composed of compost facility operators, farmers, OSU Extension and county staff, met 11 times in 1996 to develop these regulations. After extensive public involvement, the regulations were adopted by the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) in July, 1997. The regulations are implemented by DEQ.

Goal: The goal of these regulations is to protect human health and the environment while continuing to promote composting in Oregon. DEQ believes composting with minimal odor and water quality problems will become the "norm" as these regulations are implemented.

Summary: Composting is identified as an important element in DEQ's solid waste management plan. As a result, regulations are minimal for small composting facilities handling only green feedstocks*, considered to be low risk to human health and the environment. Large facilities and those handling non-green feedstocks* must comply with more human health and environmental protections because of their greater risk. All facilities must comply with standards for odor minimization.

Green Feedstocks are materials low in: a) substances that pose a present or future hazard to human health or the environment and b) low in and unlikely to support human pathogens. Green feedstocks include but are not limited to: yard debris, animal manures, wood waste, vegetative food waste, produce waste, vegetative restaurant waste, vegetative food processor by-products and crop residue.

Non-Green Feedstocks are materials high in: a) substances that pose a present or future hazard to human health or the environment and b) high in and likely to support human pathogens. Non-green feedstocks include but are not limited to: animal parts and by-products, mixed materials containing animal parts or by-products, dead animals and municipal solid waste.

Composting Regulation/Permit Requirements

Types of Regulation:

Composting Registration: for facilities utilizing as feedstocks for composting:

1. More than 20 tons and less than or equal to 2,000 tons of green feedstocks in a calendar year, or
2. More than 20 tons and less than or equal to 5,000 tons of feedstocks, which are exclusively yard debris and wood waste in a calendar year.

**Must Comply with (A), see below*

Composting General Permit: for facilities utilizing as feedstocks for composting.

1. More than 2,000 tons of green feedstocks in a calendar year, or
2. More than 5,000 tons of feedstocks, which are exclusively yard debris and wood waste in a calendar year.

**Must comply with (A) and (B), see below*

Composting Full Permit: for facilities utilizing more than 20 tons of feedstocks for composting during a calendar year that include any amount of non-green feedstocks.

**Must comply with (A), (B), and (C), see below*

Human Health and Environmental Protections & Other Requirements

- A. Odor minimization plan, mass balance calculation, water quality protections, operations and maintenance manual and records of incoming feedstocks.
- B. and design of physical features of the site, plan for utilization of processed compost, facility closure plan, scale drawings, all-weather access road, fire protections, control of access to the site, control of and methods to minimize noise, vectors, dust and litter and proper storage of feedstocks and residues
- C. protective layer underneath compost processing and feedstock areas, pathogen reduction, proper techniques for salvaging noncompostable materials.



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Exemptions

The following are exempted from the requirements to obtain a DEQ composting registration or permit:

Composting facilities or agricultural composting* operations utilizing less than or equal to 20 tons of green or non-green feedstocks for composting in a calendar year;

Agricultural operations composting green feedstocks generated and composted at the same agricultural operation and all the compost is used at the same agricultural operation at an agronomic rate;

Other agricultural composting operations that are following a compost management plan approved by the Oregon Department of Agriculture;

Production of silage on a farm for animal feed;

Home composting;

Institutional composting*;

Reload facilities*;

Composting facilities utilizing sewage sludge or biosolids under a valid DEQ water quality permit.

Agricultural Composting means composting as an agricultural operation conducted on lands employed for farm use.

Institutional Composting means the composting of green feedstocks generated from the facility's own activities. It may also include supplemental feedstocks. Feedstocks must be composted on-site, the compost produced must be utilized within the contiguous boundaries of the institution and not offered for sale or use off-site. Institutional composting includes but is not limited to: parks, apartments, universities, schools, hospitals, golf courses and industrial parks.

Reload Facility means a facility or site that accepts and reloads only yard debris and wood waste for transport to another location.

Questions? General Information: (503) 229-5934. For site specific information, contact the DEQ office closest to your facility.



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