

Setting up a Food Scraps Compost Program

Learn how to set up and maintain a food scraps compost program at your food-related business.

Hablamos español. Por favor comuníquese con nosotros para recibir recursos y servicios en español.

Set up service

You'll need to set up food scraps collection service with your franchised waste provider. In most urban communities in Clackamas County, this service is included alongside your regular garbage and recycling service without an additional cost. To get started,

- Fill out the online intake form
- Contact your franchised waste provider
- Connect with us and we'll work with your provider

Set up your space



Outdoor containers

Your garbage company will provide food only containers for your outside waste collection area. All containers – food only, recycling, and garbage – should be well-labeled with stickers showing what can and cannot go in each container.

Indoor containers

Place containers where food is prepped and plates are scraped. Small containers work best since food waste is heavy: They are easier to lift, carry, and empty into outside containers. We provide a limited supply of free bins to get started.

Some common setup's use:

- **Buckets** with handles, which are easy to carry, empty, and wash. They can be used on top or beneath food prep areas or nest within a slim container.
- **Slim containers**



FOOD ESTABLISHMENT



Posters and stickers

Use our free posters and stickers to label all waste containers clearly.

These labels show staff what should and shouldn't go in each container. This is especially important since the guidelines for composting at home are different than at work, and an on-the-spot reminder is helpful.



Always use posters and stickers provided by your local waste authority, since guidelines outside the tri-county area are different.



Bin liners

You don't have to use bin liners, and we don't encourage you to since they are an added cost to your business and cause issues at the processing facility, but many food service businesses use them to keep containers clean and to reduce mess and odors.

Only [BPI-certified](#) compostable bags are allowed. Many restaurant supply stores and janitorial supply vendors carry them.



Additional tips

Avoid odors and pests

Empty and clean internal bins daily. Buckets can be run through the dishwasher. In the summer only, use BPI-certified compostable bags to reduce the impacts of built-up food in hot outside containers. If your outside containers are leaking or coated with food, request an outside container swap with your waste provider. This can be done up to two times a calendar year for no extra cost.

Fats, oils and grease

HOLD FOR CONTENT

Train staff



Before you start separating food waste, make sure staff understands what goes, where to empty the containers, and how to keep containers clean.

What goes in, what stays out

Label all containers with stickers and waste areas with posters to show what can and can't go in each bin.

Business compost is **food only**: No napkins, paper products, or other non-food items. Conduct occasional spot checks to make sure non-food items aren't going into the compost bin. Correct issues before they become a habit.



Lift safely.

Compost containers can get heavy quickly. Don't fill containers to the top. When emptying internal containers into a dumpster or large roll cart, it's best to have two people lift and dump the container, especially with the larger 23-gallon slim container.



Clean containers.

Containers should be cleaned regularly to prevent odors and fruit flies. For sanitation reasons, containers must be cleaned out at the dump sink, not the food prep sinks. Five-gallon buckets can go in many dishwashers for easy cleaning. For larger indoor containers, use soap and water and make sure to dispose of the rinse water in a sanitary sewer drain (not storm drains).

Free tools and resources

Indoor containers, posters and stickers are available for no cost to help you set up your program.



Training videos (English and Spanish)

There are several training videos on [our website](#) to teach managers and kitchen staff how to set up a successful program, tips from an experienced chef in setting up a program, what can and cannot go in the recycling and compost, the importance of keeping containers clean, and how a local business reduced their food waste by 50% after seeing what was being composted.

Benefits of separating food for compost

- **Reduce costs.** Knowing what's composted might help you reduce how much of certain foods you order and prepare, which can lower your purchasing costs and cut prep time.
- **Save money.** Taking food out of the trash can lead to less garbage and lower bills.
- **Keep food out of landfill.** Food scraps sent to the landfill decompose and emit methane gas, a pollutant that contributes to climate change.
- **Aligns with your customer and staff values.** People want to work for and support businesses that share their values.

For more information, contact:

Clackamas County Sustainability & Solid Waste

www.clackamas.us/recycling/work

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SCAN ME

