

Composting and Organics Management

Roughly 35 percent of materials thrown away in Michigan are organics that can be recovered or managed in another way. Michigan recently passed new solid waste and recycling amendments that took effect in March of 2023. To help divert organics from landfills, some of the amendments focus on:



- Ensuring that residents and businesses have more access to and options for organics management services, such as composting.
- Local planning for the siting and development of facilities for the composting of yard waste and other organic materials.
- Improving the management practices of composting and organics management facilities to minimize risks to people and the environment.

EGLE worked over the course of several years to coordinate the development of legislation with representatives from local governments, business, and industry, including the organics industry, consultants, environmental organizations, and recycling organizations. This team of stakeholders helped develop amendments that encourage a culture that promotes the environmental, social, and economic benefits of managing organics more sustainably.

The legislative amendments provide for the development of new Materials Management Plans by all 83 Michigan counties, including how each county plan will address organic materials recovery. Composting facilities will need to be consistent with these county plans.

The amendments also create new criteria for classifying and regulating composting facilities and the materials that they manage. This includes increased oversight of organics management facilities.

The new amendments alone will not create the conditions necessary to promote an environment where the composting industry can thrive. To be successful, Michigan must also work to grow markets for the materials being produced at organics management facilities. The amendments focus on market development by supporting research and development, technical assistance, and financial support to develop new and innovative uses for organic materials.

Please visit Michigan.gov/EGLEMMP for resources as they become available.

Please see Materials Management Plan, Subpart 11, starting at Section 11571 of [Part 115](#), Solid Waste Management, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, Act 451 of 1994, as amended, for all requirements.

Compostable Materials: Organic material that can be converted to finished compost.

Class 1 Compostable Materials

- Yard Waste
- Food Waste
- Manure or Animal Bedding
- Dead Animals Unless Infectious or Managed Under BODA
- Paunch
- Aquatic Plants
- Wood
- Paper Products
- Other Compostable Products
- Anaerobic Digestate
- Spent Grain from Breweries
- Food Processing Residuals
- Fats, Oils, and Greases (FOGs), and other materials approved by EGLE

Class 2 Compostable Materials

- Mixed Municipal Solid Waste
- Other Compostable Material not Listed or Approved as Class 1
- Biosolids
- State or Federal Controlled Substances

Exempt Compost Activities

- Class 1 compost facilities under 500 yds³
- Temporary accumulation sites
- Sites that generate and use the compostable material on-site
- Farms that make and use compost on-farm

Increased oversight for non-farm, commercial, organics composting facilities

- Annual Inspections and increased site visits
- General Permit and financial assurance for large facilities
- All regulated facilities must submit an Annual Volume Report
- Limits on amounts of certain materials entering smaller facilities to help prevent nuisances

Small Composting Facility

- 500 yds³ - 1,000 yds³
- Must notify EGLE that it is in operation
- Must not contain more than 5% of Class 1 compostable materials other than yard waste

Medium Composting Facility

- 1,000 yds³ - 10,000 yds³
- Must obtain a Registration
- Annual Inspection
- No more than 5,000 yds³ per any acre of the site
- Must not contain more than 10% of Class 1 compostable materials other than yard waste

Large Composting Facility

- Over 10,000 yds³
 - Or over 10% of Class 1 materials
 - Or any size Class 2 facility
- Must obtain General Permit
- Annual Inspection
- Financial Assurance

Terms

Composting – A process of biological decomposition of Class 1 or Class 2 Compostable Material that is carried out under controlled aerobic conditions using mechanical handling techniques (physical turning, windrowing, etc.) or in a system using vermiculture (worms). It also must stabilize the organic fraction into a material that can be easily and safely stored, handled, and used in an environmentally acceptable manner.

Compostable Products – Biodegradable containers, fabric, utensils, and other products that are certified by the Biodegradable Products Institute or meet ASTM D6400.

General Permit – A permit that covers a category of activities that EGLE determines will not negatively impact human health or cause long term adverse impacts on the natural resources and environment. It also includes requirements for application fees, a site plan, an operations plan, and financial assurance.

Food Waste – An accumulation of animal, or vegetable matter used or intended for human or animal food or that results from the preparation, use, cooking, dealing in, or storing of animal or vegetable matter. Food waste does not include fats, oils, or grease.

Yard Waste – Leaves, grass clippings, vegetable or other garden debris, shrubbery, or brush or tree trimmings, less than 4 feet in length and 2 inches in diameter, which can be converted to compost. This does not include stumps, agricultural wastes, animal waste, roots, sewage sludge, Christmas trees or wreathes, food waste, or finished compost made from yard waste.

Temporary Accumulation – A person may temporarily accumulate yard waste if the following requirements are met:

- Does not create a nuisance or result in a violation
- Yard Waste is not mixed with other compostable materials
- No more than 1,000 cubic yards are placed on-site, unless a greater volume is approved by EGLE
- Yard Waste placed on-site April 1 – November 30 must move to another location within 30 days after being placed on site, unless a longer time period is approved by EGLE
- Yard Waste placed on site December 1–March 31 must move to another location by the next April 1
- Must notify EGLE annually that it is a temporary yard waste accumulation site and must maintain records necessary to demonstrate that these requirements are met.

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