

# FOOD WASTE

## Frequently Asked Questions

**NO**

**PLASTIC  
PAPER  
FOAM  
FOIL**

### **Will collecting materials for composting attract pests?**

Keeping your collection bins and food waste cart clean are key to preventing problems. All of the materials that you'll be collecting for the food waste program are already present in your garbage. If you don't normally have problems with pests getting into your garbage, then you are much less likely to have any problems when you collect the food waste separately.

If pest problems do occur, more frequent bin washing with hot water and a small amount of bleach, oxygen-based bleach alternatives, or baking soda should resolve the problem. Make sure that all wash water is disposed of in the sanitary sewer, not down a storm drain. Keeping garbage and recycling enclosures clean and free of debris helps deter pests as well.

### **What about odor problems?**

To minimize odors, regularly empty collection containers and periodically rinse them with soap and hot water as mentioned above. Another remedy for odors is a product called "Dumpster Fair" available from Zep. This is an industrial odor control product in granular form that can be applied directly to food waste containers. For more information, check the website at [www.zep.com](http://www.zep.com).

### **How much "contamination" (non-compostable material) is acceptable in the food waste bin?**

No contamination is acceptable in the food waste program due to its negative impact on the safety, appearance, and marketability of the finished compost product.

The best rule of thumb is this: if you're not sure an item is food waste, dispose of it as garbage until you can determine that it is, in fact, acceptable. Please make every effort to keep plastics, paper, foil, metals, and glass out of the bins.

### **Can I use regular plastic bags in my interior containers?**

This is not recommended, but it can be done if the contents are emptied into your outdoor food waste cart and the plastic bag is then put in the garbage. Businesses that choose to use regular plastic liners should attach them to the bins using bungees or rubber-bands, have employees empty the contents into the outdoor cart and throw the bag into the garbage.



Contact Waste Connections  
[recyclehelp@wasteconnections.com](mailto:recyclehelp@wasteconnections.com)  
**360-892-5370**

## What are the keys to success?

1. Set up a meeting with a waste reduction specialist to learn how the program works and find out if it's right for your organization.
2. Get an estimate on service levels and pricing.
3. Set a start date that will allow you time to educate all staff on how to use the program and get your internal infrastructure in place, such as collection bins.
4. Educate staff through whatever means are most effective for your organization, but it's best to do it in more than one way. Common avenues are staff meetings, emails, newsletters, and bulletin boards. Be creative and do what works best for your organization.
5. Launch! Make a big deal about it. If at all possible, station someone that understands the program near collection bins, particularly during high use periods, to answer any questions that come up and to keep an eye out for contaminants.
6. Monitor. This step is essential. When you walk by the food waste collection container, look inside to see if there are contaminants. If so, remove them and give feedback to your staff. Over time, less mistakes will be made.
7. Reward your staff for effective participation when possible. If you conduct a waste audit prior to starting the program and another after you start, you can share with them how much material they've helped divert from going to a landfill.
8. Finally, monitor your garbage container. As you divert food waste from going into the garbage, you should be able to reduce your garbage service level and this step is where you could possibly save money.