

Organics Drop-off

AT THE ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can participate in this program?

The organics drop-off program is for residents who are recycling organics at home. The program is open to residents of Washington, Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Hennepin, and Ramsey counties.

Free starter kits and compostable bags are only available to Washington County residents. Limit 1 kit per household.

Do you accept organics from businesses?

No, we do not accept organics from businesses. Visit BizRecycling.com for details on business recycling.

How do I get started?

- 1 Sign up online & pick-up a free starter kit!** www.co.washington.mn.us/organics
Starter kits include a 2 gallon kitchen pail and 10 compostable bags. Kits are available to Washington County residents only.
- 2 Start collecting organics at home.**
Line your pail with a compostable bag and start collecting organics! See yes/no list on page 2.
- 3 Bring bagged organics to the Washington County Environmental Center.**
Use the drive-through lane to drop off organics. An attendant will take your bags and give you the same number of new empty bags in exchange. See www.co.washington.mn.us/envirocenter for hours and location.

How often can I drop off organics at the Environmental Center?

You can visit the Environmental Center at any time during operating hours.

Do organics have to be bagged in a compostable bag?

Yes, organics must be bagged in a “BPI certified” compostable bag. Paper bags containing organics are accepted if they are intact.

Will this smell and attract pests?

Odors will be similar to regular trash and will not attract pests if managed properly. Dropping off your organics on a weekly basis will help minimize odor and pests.

Can I put yard waste in with my organics?

No. Yard waste can be taken to a yard waste **drop-off site**. Some waste haulers also pick up yard waste.

How are organics recycled?

The organics collected are recycled at a local facility and turned into compost.

Organics Drop-off at the Environmental Center

What materials are accepted?

Food

- Fruit and vegetables
- Meat, fish, and bones
- Dairy products
- Eggs and egg shells
- Bread, pasta, beans, and rice
- Nuts and shells
- Coffee grounds, filters, and tea bags
- Animal and pet food

Non-recyclable paper

- Paper towels, napkins and tissues
- Pizza delivery boxes
- Paper egg cartons
- Dirty paper bags
- Toilet paper and paper towel tubes

Certified compostable products

- Certified compostable paper and plastic cups, plates, bowls, utensils, and containers
- Look for the BPI logo to ensure it is compostable

Other residential compostable items

- Hair, fur, and nail clippings
- Cotton balls and swabs with paper stems
- Houseplants and flowers

What materials are **NOT** accepted?

- Yard waste
- Animal and pet waste, litter, or bedding
- Dead animals
- Diapers
- Cleaning or baby wipes
- Dryer lint and dryer sheets
- Items that can be recycled (cartons, glass, metal, paper, plastic)
- Frozen food boxes
- Styrofoam™
- Rubber
- Wood

Quick Tips for Storage and Transport

Use a rigid tote or pail to transport bags

Compostable bags start to break down sooner than you think. Using a rigid container that can be emptied and returned helps avoid spills and leaks in your vehicle.

Avoid plastic bags

Plastic bags are not accepted. They are very difficult to empty and frequently too dirty to recycle. If you don't have a tote, try using a paper grocery bag instead. They should hold up for the trip and are compostable.

Freeze it

If you're concerned about odors during transport, you can always freeze your bags.

Seal it

If you're worried about pests, use a 5-gallon pail with a tight seal or a galvanized steel can with locking lid. Always keep it stored in a cool dry place.

