

**What are the benefits of the Universal Recycling law?**

- Increases Vermont's recycling and composting rates, conserves resources, and reduces energy use
- Stimulates economic growth and creates jobs
- Lowers Vermont's greenhouse gas emissions from waste by an estimated 37%
- Conserves landfill space, and reduces the need for more landfills or transporting trash out of state
- Standardizes recycling and composting requirements statewide

**We only have small amounts of food scraps at our office, job site, or non-food store. How are we expected to manage these food scraps?**

Starting July 1, food scraps are banned from the trash for everyone in Vermont, including all businesses and institutions. ANR-DEC expects workplaces to inform employees of the system for managing food scraps separate from the trash. Workplaces use a variety of systems—compost on-site, subscribe to a small food scrap pick-up (collect a bucket of scraps weekly, biweekly, or monthly), have staff take turns bringing food scraps to a drop-off or home, or encourage employees to take scraps home individually for home composting. Large offices or businesses may find they need curbside food scrap pick-up.

**Is anyone going to enforce the law's requirements?**

Yes. The Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has enforcement authority. However, education and outreach are the initial methods of implementation. Solid waste districts and towns may have enforcement authority under local ordinances.

**What are food scraps?**

Food scraps are 1) parts of food that are typically **discarded rather than eaten**: peels, rinds, cores, eggshells, seeds, pits, bones, shells, coffee grounds and filters, loose-leaf tea, and fats/oils/ grease, and 2) food that was **not finished**: "plate scraps" or leftovers that went bad. Any type of food can become food scraps—bread, pasta, soup, vegetables, fruit, sauces, meat, fish, dairy, sweets, etc.

Make sure there are no produce stickers, butter packets, plastic bags, twist ties, or other non-compostable items in your food scraps. Ask your composter or hauler if they accept other organic materials, such as residual animal feed, wooden stir sticks, or compostable paper. Find [a food scrap hauler](#) at [VTrecycles.com](http://VTrecycles.com).

**How much does food scrap collection cost?**

Costs vary, as they do for trash and recycling services, and must be negotiated with your hauler. Waste haulers must offer food scrap collection by July 1, 2020. When comparing quotes, consider how often the hauler would empty and clean your containers and how food scrap collection factors into your overall costs. As you remove food scraps from your trash, you may be able to lower your trash fees by getting trash picked up less often and/or reducing your trash dumpster size. Find a [hauler](#) at [VTrecycles.com](http://VTrecycles.com).

**Is separating food scraps for composting or animal feed allowed by the Vermont Department of Health?**

Yes. Even on-site composting is allowed. See the Department of Health regulations at [healthvermont.gov](http://healthvermont.gov).

**How can we discourage insects from the outside cart in the summer?**

When it is warm out, cover food scraps with several inches of dry brown plant material (e.g. wood shavings, sawdust, etc.) or coffee grounds to hold in smells and slow down insects.

**What if there are no collection or drop-off options for recycling, leaf/yard debris, or food scraps near me?**

All solid waste facilities and drop-offs that collect trash must separately collect the required recyclables and food scraps (and may charge to do so); they must also collect leaf and yard debris seasonally. Haulers must offer recycling collection and, starting July 1, they must offer food scrap collection to commercial customers unless another hauler is willing to provide the service. If you are not receiving these services, call ANR at (802) 828-1138.

**If customers or employees recycle the wrong things or put food scraps or recyclables in the trash, is my business or institution responsible?**

Yes. Your business or institution is responsible for all solid waste materials produced during normal operations. To help customers and staff properly separate these materials, use the standardized, statewide, Universal Recycling symbols (download at [VTrecycles.com](http://VTrecycles.com)) to create signs and posters for your facility.

**If compost facilities sell the compost from food scraps, why do I have to pay them to take it?**

It costs money to collect and haul materials and to turn food scraps into compost. The sale of compost does not cover these costs. Composting costs include machinery, labor, fuel, and other compost ingredients, such as woodchips, that must be mixed in with food scraps.

**Is it okay to give food scraps to pig farmers or chicken farmers?**

Only food scraps that are free of meat or fish and have not come into contact with meat/fish or their oils/juices may be fed to pigs. Guidance on swine feeding is available here: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/sites/agriculture/files/documents/Feeding%20Food%20Scraps%20to%20Pigs%20January%202018.pdf>. Chickens may be given any food scraps, including meat.

**Can food scraps be ground by an in-sink garbage disposal?**

Yes, but this is not advised, as pipes and septic systems are not designed to handle large amounts of food scraps, particularly oils and grease, so putting them down the drain can clog pipes and lead to a need to pump septic tanks more often. Food scraps can also create costly problems for municipal sewer systems. Composting is a better option and reduces the risk of clogs, backups, and sewage releases.

**What do I do if my landlord provides trash collection but not recycling or food scrap collection?**

Ask your [solid waste district or town](#) if a local ordinance requires your landlord to provide recycling or food scrap collection. If it is required, your landlord must add these services. If your business shares a dumpster with residences, your hauler must provide trash and recycling for one bundled fee. If your hauler will not do this, call ANR. If these situations do not apply to you, your business still must properly recycle and separate food scraps according to state law. Consider asking your landlord to provide recycling or food scrap collection as part of your lease or asking them to reduce your rent if you independently hire a recycling or food scrap hauler. When people start to separate recycling and food scraps from the trash, they can sometimes save money by switching to a smaller trash dumpster or less frequent pickups. When several businesses share a trash dumpster, sometimes they contract for recycling and food scrap services together. Having trouble? Your local waste district or town ([802recycles.com](http://802recycles.com)) or ANR can provide no-cost assistance.