

The Florida Handbook of Solid and Hazardous Waste Regulation: Composting¹

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How is the use of composting regulated?

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) has established detailed regulations for the production and use of compost created from waste. These regulations exclude compost obtained from backyard composting and normal farming operations. Compost from agricultural activities is exempt from regulation only if used on the property where it was composted, as part of the farming operation. Any compost that is sold must meet the requirements of the regulations.

Any facility that produces compost commercially must obtain permits from FDEP and comply with detailed FDEP regulations. The statute regulating composting, Chapter 62-709, Florida Administrative Code, was substantially amended in 2010. These amendments established registration requirements for smaller facilities that process yard trash and organic material. Additional requirements for the testing and use of processed materials, as well as revised criteria for facilities that compost municipal solid waste,

are forthcoming. These regulations are quite complex, so you should contact FDEP for more information about them if you intend to commercially market compost generated from your agricultural operations (<https://floridadep.gov/waste>).

What wastes may be composted?

Wastes produced in “normal farming operations” (e.g., activities used in the production of animal and plant products) may be composted. Normal waste from these operations includes organic agricultural waste, manure, and wastes derived solely from agricultural crops. Wastes that may be composted in urban areas include garden and lawn plant debris and normal household food wastes (also known as backyard composting). In addition, organic producers should refer to the National Organic Program for regulations particular to organic agriculture (<https://www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/programs-offices/national-organic-program>).

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What wastes may not be composted?

Any biohazardous wastes, mechanical wastes, chemical wastes, or asbestos-containing wastes, except in the small quantities normally found in household waste, may not be composted.

What uses of compost are prohibited?

Compost from solid waste may never be used as fill material in any body of surface water. In addition, FDEP regulations prohibit any application of compost that would endanger public health or the environment.

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