

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Using the Scope Tables

Tables A and B should be used in conjunction with each other to help you understand what is included in the standard municipal solid waste (MSW) recycling rate and what is excluded. First, use Table A, Scope of Materials Included in the Standard MSW Recycling Rate, to identify which materials are defined as MSW (Column 2, What Is MSW) and which materials are defined as Other Solid Waste (Column 3, What Is Not MSW). The materials outlined in column 2, What Is MSW, are included in both the recycling and waste generation totals of the standard recycling rate.

After you have determined which materials are included in the standard recycling rate, use Table B, Scope of Activities Included in the Standard MSW Recycling Rate, to further refine the scope based on whether the recycling of the materials defined in Table A meets the standard definition of recycling outlined in Table B. As an example, tires from automobiles are defined as MSW according to Table A, so the disposal of such tires may be included in your waste generation total. If these tires are retreaded, however, they may not be included in your recycling total since retreading is considered reuse rather than recycling according to Table B.

TABLE A. SCOPE OF MATERIALS INCLUDED IN THE STANDARD MSW RECYCLING RATE

MATERIAL¹	WHAT IS MSW	WHAT IS NOT MSW²
Food Scraps	Uneaten food and food preparation wastes from residences and commercial establishments (restaurants, supermarkets, and produce stands), institutional sources (school cafeterias), and industrial sources (employee lunchrooms).	Food processing waste from agricultural and industrial operations.
Glass Containers	Containers; packaging; and glass found in appliances, furniture, and consumer electronics.	Glass from transportation equipment (automobiles) and construction and demolition (C&D) debris (windows).
Lead-Acid Batteries	Batteries from automobiles, trucks, and motorcycles.	Batteries from aircraft, military vehicles, boats, and heavy-duty trucks and tractors.
Tin/Steel Cans and Other Ferrous Metals	Tin-coated steel cans; strapping; and ferrous metals from appliances (refrigerators), consumer electronics, and furniture.	Ferrous metals from C&D debris and transportation equipment.
Aluminum Cans and Other Nonferrous Metals	Aluminum cans; nonferrous metals from appliances, furniture, and consumer electronics; and other aluminum items (foil and lids from bimetal cans).	Nonferrous metals from industrial applications and C&D debris (aluminum siding, wiring, and piping).
Paper	Old corrugated containers; old magazines; old newspapers; office papers; telephone directories; and other paper products including books, third-class mail, commercial printing, paper towels, and paper plates and cups.	Paper manufacturing waste (mill broke) and converting scrap not recovered for recycling.
Plastic	Containers; packaging; bags and wraps; and plastics found in appliances, furniture, and sporting and recreational equipment.	Plastics from transportation equipment.
Textiles	Fiber from apparel, furniture, linens (sheets and towels), carpets ³ and rugs, and footwear.	Textile waste generated during manufacturing processes (mill scrap) and C&D projects.
Tires	Tires from automobiles and trucks.	Tires from motorcycles ⁴ , buses, and heavy farm and construction equipment.
Wood	Pallets; crates; barrels; and wood found in furniture and consumer electronics.	Wood from C&D debris (lumber and tree stumps ⁵) and industrial process waste (shavings and sawdust).
Yard Trimmings	Grass, leaves, brush and branches, and tree stumps. ⁵	Yard trimmings from C&D debris.
Other	Household hazardous waste (HHW) ⁶ , oil filters, fluorescent tubes ⁷ , mattresses, and consumer electronics.	Abatement debris, agricultural waste, combustion ash, C&D debris, industrial process waste, medical waste, mining waste, municipal sewage and industrial sludges, natural disaster debris ⁸ , used motor oil, oil and gas waste, and preconsumer waste.

TABLE A. NOTES

- ¹ Composite materials are categorized according to their main constituent; however, they can be designated as a separate category under Other MSW if they cannot be otherwise categorized.
- ² These wastes are not considered MSW due to one or more of the following reasons: (1) they are not defined as MSW in EPA's *Characterization of Municipal Solid Waste in the United States*, (2) they have not been historically handled and disposed of as MSW, (3) they are regulated as hazardous waste, and/or (4) they were generated by a preconsumer source. These non-MSW wastes are referred to as Other Solid Waste in this guide and on the survey forms and worksheets.
- ³ Carpets are categorized as Textiles when discarded in MSW and are included in the rate calculation. When carpets are discarded in C&D debris, they are not considered MSW and are excluded from the rate calculation.
- ⁴ Tires from motorcycles are not defined as MSW because they historically have not been characterized as MSW in EPA's *Characterization of Municipal Solid Waste in the United States*.
- ⁵ Tree stumps are categorized as Yard Trimmings when discarded in MSW and are included in the rate calculation. When tree stumps are discarded in C&D debris, they are not considered MSW and are excluded from the rate calculation.
- ⁶ HHW includes paints, stains, varnishes, solvents, pesticides, and other materials or products containing volatile chemicals that catch fire, react, explode under certain circumstances, or that are corrosive or toxic. Specific examples include oil-based paint, antifreeze, household cleansers, and bug sprays. Used motor oil is excluded.
- ⁷ Fluorescent tubes are categorized as Other MSW when found in MSW and are included in the rate calculation. When fluorescent tubes are discarded in C&D debris, they are not considered MSW and are excluded from the rate calculation.
- ⁸ Natural disasters include earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and tornados. Heavy storms are not considered natural disasters.

TABLE B. SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES INCLUDED IN THE STANDARD MSW RECYCLING RATE

RECYCLABLE MATERIAL	WHAT COUNTS AS RECYCLING	WHAT DOES NOT COUNT AS RECYCLING¹
Food Scraps	Composting of food scraps from grocery stores, restaurants, cafeterias, lunchrooms, and private residences, and the use of food scraps to feed farm animals.	Backyard (onsite) composting of food scraps, and the use of food items for human consumption (food banks).
Glass	Recycling of container and packaging glass (beverage and food containers), and recycling of glass found in furniture, appliances, and consumer electronics into new glass products such as containers, packaging, construction materials (aggregate), or fiberglass (insulation).	Recycling of glass found in transportation equipment and construction and demolition (C&D) debris, recycling of preconsumer glass or glass from industrial processes, and reuse of refillable glass bottles.
Lead-Acid Batteries	Recycling of lead-acid batteries found in cars, trucks, or motorcycles into new plastic and lead products.	Recycling of lead-acid batteries used in large equipment, aircraft, military vehicles, boats, heavy-duty trucks and tractors, and industrial applications.
Metals	Recycling of aluminum and tin/steel cans, and recycling of metals found in appliances and packaging into new metal products.	Reuse of metal containers, packaging, furniture, or consumer electronics, and recycling of metals found in transportation equipment (autobodies) and C&D debris.
Paper	Recycling of paper products (old newspapers and office papers) into new paper products (tissue, paperboard, hydromulch, animal bedding, or insulation materials).	Reuse of paper products, recycling of preconsumer or manufacturing waste (trimmings, mill broke, print overruns, and overissue publications), and combustion of paper for energy recovery.
Plastic	Recycling of plastic products (containers, bags, and wraps), and recycling of plastic from furniture and consumer electronics into new plastic products (fiber fill and plastic lumber).	Reuse of plastic products (storage containers and sporting equipment), recycling of preconsumer plastic waste or industrial process waste, and combustion of plastics for energy recovery.
Textiles	Recycling of textiles into wiper rags, and recycling of apparel and carpet fiber ² into new products such as linen paper or carpet padding.	Reuse of apparel.
Tires	Recycling of automobile and truck tires into new products containing rubber (trash cans, storage containers, and rubberized asphalt), and use of whole tires for playground and reef construction.	Recycling of tires from motorcycles, buses, and heavy farm and construction equipment, retreading of tires, and combustion of tire chips for energy recovery.
Wood	Recycling of wood products (pallets and crates) into mulch, compost, or similar uses.	Repair and reuse of pallets, combustion of wood for energy recovery, recycling of industrial process waste (wood shavings or sawdust), and recycling of wood from C&D debris.
Yard Trimmings	Offsite recycling of grass, leaves, brush or branches ³ , and tree stumps ⁴ into compost, mulch, or similar uses; and landspreading of leaves ⁵ .	Mulching of tree stumps ⁴ from C&D debris, backyard (onsite) composting, grasscycling, landspreading of leaves ⁵ , and combustion of yard trimmings for energy recovery.
Other	Household hazardous waste (HHW) ⁶ , oil filters, fluorescent tubes ⁷ , mattresses, circuit boards, and consumer electronics ⁸ .	Recycling of used oil, C&D debris (asphalt, concrete, and natural disaster debris), transportation equipment (autobodies), municipal sewage sludge, and agricultural, industrial, mining, and food processing waste.

TABLE B. NOTES

- ¹ These activities are not considered recycling due to one or more of the following reasons: (1) they are not defined as recycling in EPA's *Characterization of Municipal Solid Waste in the United States*, (2) they involve the recycling of materials that are not part of MSW, (3) they involve reuse or source reduction, and/or (4) they involve the recycling of preconsumer waste.
- ² Carpeting is categorized as Textiles when discarded in MSW and is included in the rate calculation. When carpets are discarded in C&D debris, they are excluded from the rate calculation.
- ³ Includes woody material such as branches, brush, and whole trees such as Christmas trees.
- ⁴ Tree stumps are categorized as Yard Trimmings when discarded in MSW and are included in the rate calculation. When tree stumps are discarded in C&D debris, they are excluded from the rate calculation.
- ⁵ Landspreading of leaves counts as recycling if the manner of the application allows timely biodegradation of the organic plant material. Landspreading of leaves does not count as recycling if the manner of the application precludes the timely biodegradation of the organic plant material.
- ⁶ HHW includes paints, stains, varnishes, solvents, pesticides, antifreeze products, and other materials or products containing volatile chemicals that catch fire, react, explode under certain circumstances, or that are corrosive or toxic. Specific examples include oil-based paint, antifreeze, household cleansers, and bug sprays. Used motor oil is excluded.
- ⁷ Fluorescent tubes are categorized as Other MSW when discarded in MSW and are included in the rate calculation. When fluorescent tubes are discarded in C&D debris, they are excluded from the rate calculation.
- ⁸ Composite materials are categorized according to their main constituent; however, they can be designated as a separate category under Other if they cannot be otherwise categorized.