

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Appendix A: Glossary

Balefill: A landfill that only accepts waste that has been baled.

Baler: A machine used to compress recyclables or waste into bundles to reduce their volume. Balers are often used on recyclables such as newspaper, plastics, and corrugated cardboard.

Burn Barrel: A container (e.g., a 55-gallon drum) used for open burning of waste.

Buy-Back Center: A facility to which individuals bring recyclables in exchange for payment.

Clean Air Act (CCA): The Clean Air Act is a federal law that requires EPA to set national health-based air quality standards to protect people and the environment against common pollutants, including ozone (smog), carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, lead, and particulate soot. State governments must devise cleanup plans to meet the health standards by a specific date. In addition, EPA sets national standards for major new sources of pollution including automobiles, trucks, and electric power plants. EPA also is charged with developing controls for major sources of such toxic pollutants as benzene.

Clean Water Act (CWA): The Clean Water Act is a federal law that established the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States. It gave EPA the authority to implement pollution control programs such as setting wastewater standards for industry. The Act also continued requirements to set water quality standards for all contaminants in surface waters. The Act made it unlawful for any person to discharge any pollutant from a point source into navigable waters, unless a permit was obtained under its provisions. It also funded the construction of sewage treatment plants under the construction grants program and recognized the need for planning to address the critical problems posed by nonpoint source pollution.

Closure: The termination of the active life of a waste management unit by either: 1) installation of a final cover, or 2) removal of all waste and contaminated soils and containment devices.

Composting: The controlled decomposition of organic materials, such as leaves, grass, and food scraps, by microorganisms. The result of this decomposition

process is compost, a crumbly, earthy-smelling, soil-like material.

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA): The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, commonly known as Superfund, was enacted by Congress in 1980. This law created a tax on the chemical and petroleum industries and provided broad federal authority to respond directly to releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances that may endanger public health or the environment. Over 5 years, \$1.6 billion was collected and the tax went to a trust fund for cleaning up abandoned or uncontrolled hazardous waste sites. CERCLA established prohibitions and requirements concerning closed and abandoned hazardous waste sites; provided for liability of persons responsible for releases of hazardous waste at these sites; and established a trust fund to provide for cleanup when no responsible party could be identified.

Construction and Demolition (C&D)

Debris: Materials resulting from the construction, remodeling, repair, or demolition of buildings, bridges, pavement, and other structures. Typically includes concrete, asphalt, wood, metals, drywall (gypsum wallboard, sheet rock, or plaster), and roofing materials. Some tribes and states also include land clearing debris such as stumps, rocks, and dirt in this category of waste.

Convenience Centers: Community waste and/or recyclables drop-off sites. They typically consist of one or more bins for waste and/or recyclables and are located at spots convenient for residents, such as near major roads or at shopping centers or community centers.

Curbside Collection: Programs in which waste or recyclable materials are collected at the curb, often from special containers, and then taken to various processing facilities.

Drop-off Collection: A method of collecting waste, recyclable, or compostable materials in which the materials are taken by individuals to collection sites, where they deposit the materials into designated containers.

End-Use Market: A company or other entity that purchases recycled materials for use as feedstock in manufacturing new products.

Generator: Any entity that produces solid waste. Generators are usually divided into the following types: residential—single or multi-family households; commercial—offices, retail and wholesale outlets; institutional—social, educational or charitable activities; and industrial—industrial processes or manufacturing operations.

Generation Rate: Amount of solid waste produced over a given period of time. For example, a community might produce 1,600 tons of waste per year. For a population of 2,000, that amounts to 4.4 pounds per person per day.

Household Hazardous Waste: The leftover content of consumer products used in and around the home that contain hazardous components, including certain paints, cleaners, stains and varnishes, car batteries, motor oil, and pesticides. Certain types of household hazardous waste have the potential to cause physical injury to sanitation workers, contaminate septic tanks or wastewater treatment systems if poured down drains or toilets, and present hazards to children and pets if left around the house. While households do not have to separate

household hazardous waste from trash under federal law, some states and localities have special disposal requirements for this waste.

Incinerator: A furnace for the routine burning of waste materials using controlled flame combustion.

Integrated Solid Waste Management: A solid waste management system composed of the following actions, steps, methods, processes, and facilities: planning, financing, regulation, operation, and management. It also includes: reduction of solid waste generation (source reduction), collection, transfer, materials recycling, composting, combustion (incineration or waste-to-energy), and disposal. EPA defines integrated solid waste management as a process for managing solid waste and materials diverted from solid waste through a combination of any of the following four methods of management: source reduction, recycling, combustion, and landfilling.

Medical Waste: All wastes from hospitals, clinics, or other health care facilities that contain or have come into contact with diseased tissues or infectious microorganisms. Can include human blood and blood products, pathological waste, discarded sharps (e.g., needles, lancets, scalpels, broken medical instruments), and contaminated animal waste. Also referred to as “red bag” waste because of the red biohazard bags in which it is discarded.

Open Burning: The uncontained burning of solid waste in a pit, pile, container, or open dump.

Open Dump: An uncovered site used for disposal of waste without environmental controls. Under RCRA, any site receiving solid waste that does not comply

with Subtitle D municipal solid waste landfill standards.

Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) Program: A waste and recyclables collection program that provides a financial incentive to reduce, reuse, and recycle waste by charging residents for hauling and disposal costs based on the amount of garbage they throw away.

Post-Closure Care: The monitoring of a closed waste management unit to verify that unacceptable releases from the unit are not occurring.

Recycling: A series of activities that includes collecting recyclable materials that would otherwise be considered waste, sorting and processing recyclables into raw materials such as fibers, and manufacturing raw materials into new products.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA): This act authorizes EPA to control solid and hazardous waste from “cradle to grave.” RCRA regulates hazardous waste generation, transportation, storage, treatment, and disposal. RCRA also sets forth a framework for the management of non-hazardous solid waste. Amendments to RCRA in 1986 also authorized EPA to address environmental problems arising from underground storage tanks (USTs) storing petroleum and other hazardous substances.

Reuse: Using a product more than once, either for the same purpose or for a different purpose. Reusing items by repairing them, donating them to charity and community groups, or selling them also reduces waste.

Roll-off Container: A large waste or recyclables container that fits onto a tractor trailer that can be dropped off and picked up hydraulically.

Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA): The Safe Drinking Water Act is the main federal law that ensures the quality of Americans' drinking water. Under the Act, EPA sets standards for drinking water quality and oversees the states, localities, and water suppliers that implement those standards.

Solid Waste: Wastes from residential, commercial, and institutional sources, such as durable and nondurable goods, containers and packaging, food scraps, yard trimmings, inorganic wastes, and construction and demolition debris.

Source Reduction (or Waste Prevention): Refers to any change in the design, manufacture, purchase, or use of materials or products (including packaging) to reduce the amount or toxicity before these materials become municipal solid waste. Source reduction also refers to the reuse of products or materials.

Special Wastes: A non-regulatory term used by tribes to describe problem wastes typically generated by households that are not disposed in household garbage containers primarily due to their size or because of disposal restrictions. The most common special wastes include tires, furniture, bicycles, appliances and other white goods, and car batteries. Tires and lead-acid car batteries are examples of special wastes that might have disposal restrictions.

Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA): This act, passed by Congress in 1976, requires that all chemicals produced or imported into the United States be tested, regulated, and screened for toxic

effects. TSCA requires that any chemical that reaches the consumer market be tested for possible toxic effects prior to commercial manufacture. Existing chemicals that pose health and environmental hazards are tracked and reported under TSCA. The management and disposal of asbestos and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are regulated under TSCA.

Transfer Station: A site or facility where waste materials are taken from smaller collection vehicles (or private vehicles) and placed in larger vehicles, including truck trailers, railroad cars, or barges for transport. Recycling and some waste processing also might take place at transfer stations.

Waste Reduction: Using source reduction, recycling, or composting to prevent or reduce waste generation.

Waste Stream: The total flow of solid waste from generators within the jurisdiction that must be recycled, reused, or disposed of.

WasteWise: WasteWise is a free, voluntary EPA partnership program through which tribes, communities, and organizations can work to eliminate waste, benefitting their bottom line and the environment. The WasteWise program can help partners design their own solid waste reduction programs tailored to their needs.

Yard Trimmings: Leaves, grass, clippings, prunings, and other natural organic matter discarded from yards or gardens. Yard trimmings also may include tree stumps and brush, but these materials are not normally handled at composting facilities.