

# FOOD WASTE MANAGEMENT FOR COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

How and why food waste should NOT go into the trash

## WHAT IS A DUMPSTER

A dumpster is any container that can hold any type of garbage or recyclable material that is serviced by a provider and designed for repeated reuse. There are two main types of dumpsters: refuse (waste) dumpsters and recycling dumpsters.

### Refuse (Waste) dumpsters:

- For disposing of rubbish and any form of waste (**except grindable food waste**)

### Recycling Dumpster:

- For disposing of recyclable items as designated by the provider. *Composting dumpsters are a type of recycling dumpster*

## PHILADELPHIA DUMPSTER LAWS

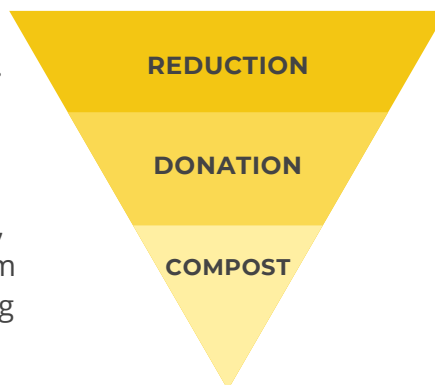
In 2009, City Council passed an ordinance § 10-722 that requires the licensing of dumpsters and the regulation of their use. This ordinance includes three main components:

1. Every dumpster user in the city requires approval to use and place a dumpster
2. Dumpster haulers need to meet a number of performance standards
3. Dumpsters must be maintained and up to standards with certain regulations about what can or can't be disposed of, such as grindable food waste

## WHAT TO DO WITH GRINDABLE FOOD WASTE

In 2015, the ordinance was amended to include that **grindable food waste is NOT permitted to be disposed of in refuse (waste) dumpsters.** All organic food waste should first be disposed of using environmentally preferable methods such as composting, anaerobic digestion, and farm livestock feed, and then using an in-sink garbage disposal.

*Food waste should be handled with the following priority as stated by the EPA:*



## WHAT IS GRINDABLE FOOD WASTE

Grindable food waste is organic food waste that can be disposed of in compost dumpsters/designated food scrap collection bins, **or** an in-sink garbage disposal (also called food waste disposers or garbage grinders). Grindable food waste includes fruits, vegetables, small bones, peels, and leftovers. **Fats, oils, and/or grease should never be put down the drain.**

Restaurants and food-handling establishments are required to install in-sink garbage disposals to manage grindable food waste. The Philadelphia Water Department recycles food waste sent down the drain into energy and fertilizers.

About 116 million pounds of food waste is generated each year by commercial facilities. A reduction in that tonnage through the use of a disposal could save money on your hauler fees!

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**About sustainability, composting, & waste:**

Office of Sustainability  
[sustainability@phila.gov](mailto:sustainability@phila.gov)

**About dumpster use & enforcement:**

Streets & Walkways Education and Enforcement Program (SWEEP)  
215-685-4275

The Department of Licenses and Inspections  
215-686-2418

# ALTERNATIVES TO FOOD WASTE DISPOSAL

## REDUCTION

An estimated 116 million pounds of food waste is generated annually from Philadelphia restaurants and approximately 4-10% of raw food in restaurants end up as garbage. There are many strategies that commercial property managers can utilize to prevent food waste generation and rely less on disposal, such as:

### MEASURE FOOD WASTE

- Generate a food waste inventory to identify when, where, and how much food was wasted
- Conduct Waste Audits yourself or with a waste consultant
- Set hard targets for waste reduction

### REDUCE CONSUMPTION AND WASTE

- Cook to order rather than batch cooking
- Store food properly to avoid spoilage and use the "first-in, first-out" method
- Evaluate and adjust portion sizes when customers often leave uneaten food on their plates

### RETHINK PURCHASING PRACTICES

- Compare purchasing practices with your waste inventory to inform future orders and prevent waste
- Buy imperfect or blemished foods

### REPURPOSE EXTRA FOOD

- Use leftover ingredients or food scraps in a creative way to avoid waste
  - Create a Zero Waste special entirely using would-be-waste food

**RESTAURANTS CAN SAVE \$7 FOR EVERY \$1 INVESTED IN REDUCING KITCHEN FOOD WASTE**

*(according to a review of 114 restaurants across 12 countries)*

## DONATION

Donation of leftover food should be pursued after taking steps to reduce food waste generation and to share edible foods that you cannot sell. Businesses and nonprofits that donate or distribute donated food are generally well-protected by laws (such as the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act) designed to provide immunity from liability related to donation, and may be eligible for a tax credit.

According to the Good Samaritan Act, qualifying food should be: apparently wholesome and meet all quality and labeling standards imposed by Federal, State, and local laws and regulations. Donations may be food that is not readily marketable due to appearance, age, freshness, grade, size, surplus, or other conditions. Additionally, consider donating foods that are often in high demand, such as high-nutrient and culturally-relevant foods. Only food with nutritional value, as determined by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), qualifies for a 55% tax credit (some items that do not qualify are candy, soda, and snack foods). If your food does not meet these criteria, you can send food scraps to a facility that treats the scraps before using them in animal feed.

## COMPOSTING

Composting can be conducted at household, community, and commercial scales, utilizing food scraps to create compost that enriches soil nutrients and increases soil health. Even further, composting can support local gardens from which you can source produce used at your business. Reach out to farms and gardens in your community to talk about partnerships that will support your food waste goals. Or, set up a contract to have your food scraps managed by a local or regional composting facility. Use a separate bin or designated composting dumpster for your compost in agreement with your food scraps hauler.

**FOR MORE RESOURCES IN PHILADELPHIA ABOUT WASTE REDUCTION, DONATION, AND COMPOSTING, VISIT [PHILA.GOV/GREEN](http://PHILA.GOV/GREEN)**



**OF EDIBLE FOOD ENDS UP IN THE TRASH EVERY DAY IN PHILADELPHIA**



**1 IN 5 PEOPLE EXPERIENCE HUNGER IN PHILADELPHIA**



**UNEATEN FOOD IS WORTH AN ESTIMATED \$165 BILLION/YEAR NATIONALLY**

**1600**

**POUNDS OF GARBAGE ARE THROWN AWAY, ON AVERAGE, PER PERSON, PER YEAR**



**WASTED FOOD CREATES GREENHOUSE GASES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO HOTTER TEMPERATURES IN PHILADELPHIA NEIGHBORHOODS**