

COMPOSTING OR MULCHING

Guidance Document

Legal Authority: Rules for Solid Waste Management, 391-3-4

391-3-4-.01(13): “Composting” means the controlled biological decomposition of organic matter into a stable, odor free humus.

391-3-4-.01(77): “Yard Trimmings” means leaves, brush, grass, clippings, shrub and tree prunings, discarded Christmas trees, nursery and greenhouse vegetative residuals, and vegetative matter resulting from landscaping development and maintenance other than mining, agricultural, and silvacultural operations.

391-3-4-.16(1)(a): Yard trimmings composting operations are excluded from regulations as solid waste handling facilities. To be considered exempt from regulation, yard trimmings must be kept separate from solid waste and must be converted to a useable compost or mulch product.

Guidance:

1. Composting of yard trimmings such as leaves, shrubbery trimmings, and grass clippings does not require a solid waste handling permit. However, if the yard trimmings composting operation is to be located on a municipal solid waste landfill, a minor modification to the municipal solid waste handling permit must be obtained.
2. Similarly, chipping logs, limbs and stumps into a useable mulch does not require permitting.
3. Since proper composting requires an adequate source of nitrogen, the use of farm animal manure, such as cow, horse, mule, hog, and poultry, will be allowed and will not require permitting. Cat, dog, and other “pet” manures must not be used. Please be reminded that, even though the composting of yard trimmings does not require a permit, the stockpiling of manures could, if not properly handled, cause problems of environmental concern that could require some intervention by the Environmental Protection Division.
4. A Solid Waste Handling Permit for Processing will be required if solid waste such as garbage, food industry wastes, industrial or municipal sludges, or solid wastes other than yard trimmings are used in a composting process.
5. Municipalities that have diverted yard trimmings or solid waste from disposal in municipal solid waste disposal facilities and have converted these materials into useable compost or mulch will be given credit towards achieving the 25% reduction goal.