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Georgia Rules for Solid Waste Management
Feedstock Categories and Compost Facility Classes

I. Feedstock Categories

Whether you want to compost for your community garden or you are a large scale composting facility, knowing the feedstock categories is important to determine the composting class of your project/facility. Based on the feedstock category, you may be exempt from permitting requirements or need to obtain a **Solid Waste Handling Permit (SWHP)** or **Permit-by-Rule (PBR) for Class 2 Composting Operations**. For a detailed breakdown of the feedstock categories and permit classes, please visit Section 391-3-4.16 of the Rules and Regulations

What is Feedstock?
"Feedstock" is defined as any organic material used in the production of compost or processed in an anaerobic digester. Feedstocks shall not include additives or amendments that are not part of the composting process.

Category A

- **Yard trimmings** including 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 silvicultural operations
- **Land clearing debris** including waste generated by the removal of debris, logs, trees or brush
- **Agricultural residuals generated on-site** including materials generated from the generally accepted farming practices on location. This includes crops from various types of farming. This does not include dead animals, wastewater or special wastes, such as waste oils or other lubricants, unused fertilizers, pesticides, or pesticide containers
- **Untreated and unpainted wood** including wood left in its natural or unfinished state

Yard trimmings

Category B

- **Agricultural residuals generated off-site** including materials generated from the generally accepted farming practices off the location. This includes crops from various types of farming. This does **not** include dead animals, wastewater or special wastes, such as waste oils or other lubricants, unused fertilizers, pesticides, or pesticide containers
- **Herbivorous (plant-eating) animal manure generated at a zoo** Others herbivorous manures fall under "agricultural residuals"
- **Source-separated organics,** including but not limited to, food residuals, food processing residuals, and compostable paper that has been separated from non-compostable material

Herbivorous animal manure

Category C

- **Sewage sludge and biosolids** (used interchangeably, these are semi-solid, nutrient rich products of the wastewater treatment process) *not managed under NPDES* (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) *or LAS* (Land Application System) permits

Biosolids

Category D

- **Dissolved air flotation (DAF) skimmings or sludge generated from food processing and de-watered septage.** DAF skimmings and sludge are generated from a wastewater treatment process that removes suspended wastewater materials such as oils or solids

DAF skimmings

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II. Compost Class Permit Requirements

Exempt from PBR or SWHP:

Class 1 & Exemptions

- Processes only Category A feedstock
- Backyard Composting
- Food residuals and yard trimmings at K-12 on site
- Generating less than 40 tons per year of food residuals on site
- Composting of dead animals, in accordance with the Georgia Dead Animal Disposal Act and Georgia Dept. of Agriculture Rules
- *Other exemptions described in Rule 391-3-4.16(3)*

PBR Required:

Class 2

- Processes only Category A and/or B feedstock
- To qualify for a permit-by-rule:
  1. Facilities receive less than 500 tons of Category B feedstock per calendar month
  2. Category B feedstock is restricted to exclude receipt of non-vegetative food processing residuals and manures
- Must comply with design and operating standards for Class 2 facilities (Rule 391-3-4.16(5)(b))

SWHP Required:

Class 3

- Processes Category A and/or B feedstock
- Does not meet Class 1 exemption or qualify for Class 2
- Facilities receive over 500 tons of Category B feedstock per calendar month
- Must comply with design and operating standards for Class 3 facilities (Rule 391-3-4.16(5)(c))

Class 4

- Processes Category A, B, and/or C feedstock
- Must comply with Class 3 and Class 4 design and operating standards (Rule 391-3-4.16(5)(d))

Class 5

- Processes Category A, B, C, and/or D feedstock
- Must comply with Class 3, 4, and 5 design and operating standards (Rule 391-3-4.16(5)(e))

Class 6

- Used for in-vessel composting and anaerobic digestion
- Processes Category A, B, C, and/or D feedstock
- Must comply with Class 6 design and operating standards (Rule 391-3-4.16(5)(f))

For more information on composting, please visit:
epd.georgia.gov/composting-and-mulching

Questions about Georgia's composting permitting requirements?
Contact the Recovered Materials Unit at (404) 362-2537

Definitions

Anaerobic Digestion: the controlled decomposition of organic material under anaerobic (oxygen-free) conditions in an anaerobic digester to produce biogas and digestate

Anaerobic Digestor: an enclosed vessel that processes organic material under anaerobic conditions

Biogas: gas generated by anaerobic digestion

Digestate: residual solids or liquids remaining after organic material has been processed in an anaerobic digester

In-vessel Composting: the aerobic (oxygen-present) decomposition of organic material in an enclosed container to produce compost

Permit-by-Rule (PBR): a PBR establishes predetermined operational limitations for composting facilities who operate under Class 2 composting

Solid Waste Handling Permit: a permit that must be obtained by composting facilities that operate under certain conditions and standards

Ready to apply?
To apply for a SWH permit or a permit-by-rule for class 2 composting operations, visit https://geos.epd.georgia.gov/GA/GEOS/Public

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