Organic Materials Processing Permit Guide
for Organics Recycling Facilities
in Unincorporated San Diego County

Updated 10.26.16

This guide is a visual summary of regulations at the County and State level that apply generally to organics recycling facilities in unincorporated areas within the County of San Diego. It is intended only for informational purposes and awareness of regulations. For additional information and to ask questions about a specific proposed recycling operation, please consult with the agencies involved.

A visual guide to:

County of San Diego Land Use, Zoning, and Local Requirements

CalRecycle Composting and In-Vessel Regulatory Tiers

State Water Resources Control Board General Waste Discharge Requirements for Composting Operations
Land Use and Zoning

6912 Community Gardens
Composting at a Community Garden

6156 Residential and Agricultural Use Types, s. Vermiculture or Vermicomposting
Materials generated onsite, where Residential and Agricultural Use types are permitted

Update 85 (Refer to Wood and Green Waste Composting Facility definition)
Backyard composting by homeowners and composting of material generated by an agricultural operation for the purpose of mulching or soil amendment on property in the same ownership as that where composting takes place

1513 Recycling Processing Facility
Recycling Processing Facility, Heavy:
Zones: C37, C38, C40, or M54, M58 upon meeting the criteria for a light recycling processing facility

1513 Recycling Processing Facility
Recycling Processing Facility, Wood and Green Materials:
Zones: C37, C40
Subject to Limitations (See Limitations on Permitted Uses #15)
Zones: M50, M52, M54, M56, M58

Minor Use Permit

1513 Recycling Processing Facility
Recycling Processing Facility, Wood and Green Materials (may include composting of wood and/or green material if conditions satisfactory to Director of Public Works):
Zones: A70, A72, S80, S82, S86, S88, S90, S92, S94

Major Use Permit

1513 Recycling Processing Facility
Recycling Processing Facility, Heavy:
Zones: C30, C31, C32, C34, C35, C36, C44, C46, M50, M52, M56

1730 Animal Waste Processing:
Zones: M58, A72, S92

Fire Authority

Sec. 96.1.105.6.19.1. of 2014 Consolidated Fire Code
An operational permit is required for greenwaste recycling, mulching, composting operations and storage.

In 2017, this code section will become Sec. 96.1.105.6.20.1.

Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD)

- Authority to Construct and Permit to Operate required for AD (biogas generating) facilities
- Permit required under stationary equipment rules for engines (>50 hp) associated with screens and grinders for processing compost material

The SDAPCD is currently drafting an update of the RAQS to identify new feasible measures to further reduce volatile organic compounds (VOCs) or nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions (as ozone precursors). Once a rule is adopted, permits would be required.

Zoning Key:

Agricultural
A70- Limited Agricultural, A72- General Agricultural,

Commercial
C30- Office-Professional, C31- Residential Office Professional, C32- Convenience Commercial, C34- General Commercial Residential C35- General Commercial/ Limited Residential, C36- General Commercial, C37- Heavy Commercial C38- Service Commercial, C40- Rural Commercial, C44- Freeway Commercial, C46- Medical Center

Industrial
M50- Basic Industrial, M52- Limited Impact Industrial, M56- Mixed Industrial, M58- High Impact Industrial

Special Purpose
S80- Open Space, S82- Extractive, S86- Parking, S88- Specific Plan Area S90- Holding Area, S92- General Rural, S94- Transportation & Utility Corridor
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**Excluded Tier**
- Agricultural material derived from an agricultural site and returned to the same site or agricultural site owned or leased by the owner, parent, or subsidiary (≤ 1,000 yd³ given away or sold annually)
- Vermicomposting and Mushroom Farming (Note: The handling of compostable materials used as growth medium is not excluded)
- Composting green material, agricultural material, food material, and vegetative food material, alone or in combination, is an excluded activity if the total amount of feedstock and compost on-site at any one time does not exceed 100 cubic yards and 750 square feet.

**EA Notification**
- Agricultural Material Composting Operations
- Green Material Composting Operations (≤ 12,500 yd³)
- Research Composting Operations (≤ 5,000 yd³ onsite at any one time)
- Chipping and Grinding Operation (≤ 200 tons per day)
- Limited Volume Digestion Facility (Average < 15 tpd (60 cy), not to exceed 105 tpd (420 cy))

**Registration Permit** (requires NDFE)
- Vegetative Food Material Composting Facilities (≤ 12,500 yd³)
- Chipping and Grinding Operation (> 200, ≤ 500 tons per day)
- Medium Volume In-Vessel Digestion Facility (average > 15 tpd (60 cy) and < 100 tpd and shall not exceed 700 tpd (2,800 cy))

**Full Compostable Materials Handling Facility Permit** (requires CEQA)
- Composting Facilities (i.e., food)
- Green Material Composting Facilities (> 12,500 yd³)
- Vegetative Food Material Composting Facilities (> 12,500 yd³)
- Chipping and Grinding Operation (> 500 tons per day)
- Large Volume In-Vessel Digestion Facility (average >100 tpd or 700 tpd (2,800 cy))

**Land Application** (conditions apply)
- Research In-Vessel Digestion Operations
- Dairy In-Vessel Operations (in accordance with WDR by RWQCB)
- Distribution Center In-Vessel Operations

In-vessel digestion activities with less than a total of 100 cubic yards of solid waste, feedstock, and digestate on-site are excluded.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excluded Tier</th>
<th>Requirement Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Composting (Not including manure composting exceeding the capacities stated below)</td>
<td>Tier I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chipping and grinding facilities and operations. This includes chipping and grinding facilities and operations at a composting facility if located outside of the composting operations area.</td>
<td>Tier II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot clearing by local governmental agencies (i.e., grubbing, tree trimming, etc.) for fire protection</td>
<td>Tier I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composting activities that are within a fully-enclosed vessel;</td>
<td>Tier II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composting operations that receive, process, and store less than 500 cubic yards (cy) of allowable materials at any given time;</td>
<td>Tier I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composting operations that receive, process, and store less than 5000 cy per year of allowable Tier I or Tier II feedstocks, additives, and amendments, and implement the following management practices: 1) Completely cover all materials during rain events to reduce the generation of wastewater; and (2) Manage the application of water to reduce the generation of wastewater.</td>
<td>Tier II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Total Facility Capacity

- **Tier I**:
  - < 25,000 cy (combination of Tier I allowable materials received, processed, and stored: feedstocks, amendments) and meets the siting criteria below.
  - ≥ 25,000 cy (all allowable materials received, processed, and stored: feedstocks, amendments)
  - or < 25,000 cy of Tier I allowable materials, which do not meet the Tier I siting criteria.

### Depth to Groundwater

- **Tier I**: Dependent on Soil Percolation Rate as follows (minutes per inch - MPI using percolation test):
  - < 1 MPI: 50 feet
  - 1 MPI - 5 MPI: 20 feet
  - > 5 MPI - 30 MPI: 8 feet
  - > 30 MPI: 5 feet
- Note that verification is required as part of NOI

### Distance to nearest water supply well, Distance to Surface Water

- **Tier I**: > 100 feet, > 100 feet
- **Tier II**: > 100 feet, > 100 feet

### Allowable Feedstocks

- **Tier I**
  - Agricultural materials
  - Green materials
  - Paper material
  - Vegetative food materials
  - Residually co-collected food and green materials
  - 10% by volume approved additives (i.e., manure, fertilizing material, anaerobic digestate)

- **Tier II**
  - Food materials (non-vegetative)
  - Biosolids (Class A, B, and/or EQ)
  - Manure
  - Anaerobic digestate derived from allowable Tier I and Tier II feedstocks
  - A combination of allowable Tier I and Tier II feedstocks
  - 30% by volume approved additives

*Excluded operations may be required to obtain other permits issued by the San Diego Water Board.*