

County of San Diego Permits for Green Materials Mulch/ Compost Facilities

Thank you for your interest in siting a green materials compost/mulch operation. The following are recommendations to help streamline the permitting process:

Step 1: Develop a Project Description

Before applying for land use approval and other permits, it is advised you begin by drafting a project description. This should include:

- The name of the proposed facility, its address and physical location
- Facility operator's contact information
- Name and contact information for the owner of the property
- APN number/s of the property and zoning designation
- Description of the location including estimated buffer distances to neighboring properties, buildings, businesses, residences, activities, etc.
- Also include existence of and estimated distances to surface or ground water sources such as ponds, lakes, streams, aquifers, etc.
- Describe the material planned to be accepted (e.g. yard trimmings, food scraps, horse manure, etc.), source of materials, estimated maximum peak volume on a daily basis (tons or cubic yards), estimated maximum onsite at any one time (in cubic yards), and estimated annual throughput (in tons or cubic yards).
- If applicable, briefly describe the composting technology planned to be used
- Also provide a description of finished products planned to be created and an overview of markets, including whether you plan on doing retail or wholesale only from the property
- Include any other non-composting activities that may be planned at the facility, such as chipping and grinding, resale of used lumber, etc.

Step 2: Acquire Local Land Use Approval

You will need this before any other permits can be acquired. A pre-application conference with at the County of San Diego's Planning and Development Services (PDS) is recommended and will help identify where your proposed activity fits in the zoning ordinance, as well as possible issues, costs, and an estimated timeframe to complete permitting.

- Contact Dag Bunnemeyer at (858) 694-2581 or Dag.Bunnemeyer@sdcounty.ca.gov at PDS for more information on permit requirements.

Due to the variability of possible approaches to composting, PDS does not have a single classification or defined rules. However, the most common designations for this activity under the County's Zoning Ordinance are "Recycling Processing Facility: Wood and Green Materials" or "Animal Waste Processing." These classifications and permit requirements can be found on the County's website at <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/zoning.html>

Pursuant to Section 6975.c of the Zoning Ordinance, a Recycling Processing Facility of Wood and Green Materials is subject to the following regulations:

- c. A facility devoted exclusively to the processing (not including composting) of wood and green materials is considered a General Industrial Use Type, and as such, shall be conducted in accordance with the regulations applicable to said Use Type except that a Wood and Green Materials Recycling Processing Facility may be permitted in an Agricultural or Special Purpose Zone upon issuance of a Minor Use Permit. The conditions of said Minor Use Permit shall require compliance with the criteria for a light recycling processing facility as set forth above in this section commencing at

subsection a.2., except for the requirements of subsection a.4 relating to size and scope of operation; subsection a.6. relating to storage within containers; and, subsection a.10. relating to noise level limits. The conditions of the Minor Use Permit shall address the above-mentioned requirements as well as any others necessary in order to make the findings required for the granting of a Minor Use Permit. Said Minor Use Permit may include composting of wood and/or green waste provided the conditions relating to composting are satisfactory to the Director of the Department of Public Works.

Zoning for Recycling Processing Facility, Wood and Green Materials requires all operations to be conducted entirely within an enclosed building except as follows:

- i. In the C37, C38 and C40 Commercial Zones and the M54 and M58 Industrial Zones, a light recycling processing facility may be conducted outside of buildings if the property on which the facility is located does not abut a property zoned or planned for residential use.
 - ii. Notwithstanding the Enclosure Regulations, in any other Commercial or Industrial Zone, a Minor Use Permit may be granted for an alternative type of enclosure such as a wall or view-obscuring fence not less than 8 feet in height and landscaped on all street frontages
- Allowed in General Industrial Zones M50, M52, M54, M56, M58 (a site plan permit may also be required)
 - Allowed with a Minor Use Permit in A70, A72, S80, S82, S86, S87, S88, S90, S92, S94

Animal Waste Processing includes manure composting and is allowed with a Major Use Permit in four zones: M58, A72, S87, S92

Step 3: Apply for Other Permits

Once you receive land use approval, contact the LEA to apply for a state composting permit:

- Contact Ricardo Serrano (858) 495-5810 or Ricardo.Serrano@sdcounty.ca.gov at County of San Diego Local Enforcement Agency (LEA)
- An operational permit from the local fire agency may be required for processing and storage of wood chips, compost, fines, and other materials typically associated with chipping and grinding and composting activities. Contact the San Diego County Fire Authority at (858) 974-5999 for more information.

You may also need a permit from the following regulatory agencies:

- *Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)* Permit applications are available from John Odermatt (619) 521-5806 or John.Odermatt@waterboards.ca.gov
- *Air Pollution Control District (APCD)* Contact the Engineering Division at (858) 586-2600 or APCDEngineering@sdcounty.ca.gov for permit information on chipping & grinding activities. They also handle permits for engines powering equipment such as tub grinders, screens, etc.

For more information on state rules and developing a composting facility, visit www.calrecycle.org