

## Managing Food Scraps at Facilities & Drop-Offs

Facilities that collect and manage food scraps should take steps to reduce and contain odors, make the drop-off convenient for users, and deter animals. There is no single best system, but successful programs have things in common.

### 1. Prevent problems before they occur:

- Develop a good relationship with your food scrap hauler and composter.
- Consider getting food scraps picked up more frequently during the warmest months.

### 2. Use accessible, easy-to-move containers:

- Locate containers somewhere easy for customers to access.
- Use lids that open easily and close tightly.
- Make sure staff can move and empty the containers, especially if this makes it possible to store the containers securely overnight (so they do not attract animals).
- 32-gallon wheeled totes are easier to move and tip than larger containers.



### 3. Keep trash out of the food scraps:

- Keep a small trash container next to the food scrap bins for plastic bags, cutlery, produce stickers, and other items that might be incorrectly placed in the food scrap containers.



### 4. Post signs for users and regularly train staff:

- Train staff to properly manage the food scrap collection system.
- Post clear signs for users that:
  - Describe what "Is" and "Is Not" accepted in food scrap containers. Photographs of actual items help.
  - Help customers understand that it is the law to keep food scraps out of the trash.
- Food scraps, recycling, and trash signs can be printed from [VTrecycles.com](http://VTrecycles.com) (scroll down and click "download materials").





## 5. Reduce odors and keep it clean:

- Instruct users and staff to cover food scraps with an inch of dry, brown, plant material, like sawdust or wood shavings, to reduce odors and insects. **Facility certifications requires this.**
  - Make the cover material, the “browns,” available for customers and train staff to cover the food scraps with “browns” regularly.
  - Top food scraps with at least three inches of “browns” at the end of each day. Finished compost also works well at controlling odors.
- Keep container lids closed tightly when not in use.
- Quickly clean up any food scraps that spill on the ground.
- Clean containers regularly with a high-pressure washing system.
- Empty containers frequently, at least once a week.
- Set up and store totes in the shade if possible.



## 6. Avoid attracting animals:

- Secure container lids at night with bungies, zip-ties, metal latches, or carabiners. (Check out these [instructions](#) for latching bins.)
- Storing rolling carts or totes in a shed, garage, or shipping container can prevent animals from accessing them, especially at night.
- A permanent electric fence, baited with bacon grease or peanut butter, can teach bears to avoid the area (wrap tinfoil with the bait on it around the wire).
- Learn more tips from the [Managing Food Scrap Containers in Bear Country](#) handout.
- If bears are a problem, contact VT Fish and Wildlife for more advice. Fill out this form to get in touch: [Anrweb.vt.gov/FWD/FW/WildlifeBearReport.aspx](http://Anrweb.vt.gov/FWD/FW/WildlifeBearReport.aspx)



Waste Management & Prevention Division  
 Solid Waste Management Program  
 1 National Life Drive, Davis 1, Montpelier, VT 05620-3704  
 802-828-1138  
[VTrecycles.com](http://VTrecycles.com)