

Managing Food Scraps at Facilities & Drop Offs

With simple steps, facilities and drop offs can provide convenience for users and staff, limit and contain odors, and prevent animal interactions as they collect and manage food scraps. 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 to access.
- Use lids that open easily.
- 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, and other items that might be incorrectly placed in the food scrap containers.



4. Post signs for users and routinely 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. Examples of actual items can help.
 - Instruct users and staff to cover food scraps with "browns," such as sawdust or wood chips, to limit odors and flies.
- Free food scraps, recycling, and trash signs can be printed from VTrecycles.com (scroll down and click "download materials").





4. Minimize the “ick factor:”

- Keep container lids closed 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.
- Cover food scraps with lots of “brown” materials, like sawdust or woodchips, to reduce odors and insects.
 - Make browns available for the public to use 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.

5. Avoid attracting animals:

- Secure bin lids at night with bungies, zip-ties, or metal latches or carabiners ([instructions](#) for latching bins).
- If possible, keep containers where animals cannot access them, like in a shed, garage, or shipping container, especially at night.
- If bears are a problem, try a permanent electric fence baited with bacon grease, peanut butter, or tuna fish by wrapping tinfoil around the wire with the bait on it. Contact VT Fish and Wildlife for more advice on preventing problematic bear interactions. Fill out this form to get in touch: Anrweb.vt.gov/FWD/FW/WildlifeBearReport.aspx
- Learn more strategies to keep bears away from food scrap and trash containers from the [Managing Food Scrap Containers in Bear Country](#) handout.



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