



# National Park Service Commercial Services Program Solid Waste Management



## What is Solid Waste?

- Solid waste is referred to as trash, garbage, or refuse.
- It may include discarded goods, containers, and packaging, as well as food waste, yard waste, and inorganic waste.
- Because each concession facility is unique in terms of its visitation, size, and amenities, the composition and quantity of solid waste varies from facility to facility.

## What is the Difference Between Compostable and Recyclable?

- Compostable materials are organic and will decompose, leaving only nutrients that can be returned to the earth. Examples of compostable items are vegetable peels, fruit skins, leaves, twigs, weeds, and cardboard packaging.
- Recyclable materials can be broken down and used in manufacturing new products. Common recyclable materials are plastic, glass, metal, and paper.
- Some waste companies recycle non-traditional waste like cigarette butts and surgical masks.

## Source Reduction and Recycling Strategies

- Divert non-hazardous solid waste, including compostable materials, and non-hazardous construction or demolition materials.
- Reduce paper use.
- Utilize the [Zero Waste Planning Tool](#) to help pursue zero-waste operations.
- Recycle or use environmentally sound practices when disposing of electronic products.

## Container Requirements

- Must be covered or closed, and be leak proof, durable, nonabsorbent, easily cleanable, and designed for safe handling
- Must be adequately sized for the type and amount of waste
- Clearly label each type of waste container (i.e., trash, recycling, compost).

## General Requirements

- Vehicles used for collection and transportation of solid waste must have enclosed or covered cargo areas
- Equipment used for compacting, collecting, and transporting solid waste must:
  - Be operated and maintained to minimize health and safety hazards
  - Meet required specifications for health and safety
  - Be properly maintained
  - Be easily cleaned
- Waste, particularly compostable waste, must be collected frequently enough to prevent the attraction of nuisances or vectors.
- Bulky waste must be collected at least once every three months.
- Large appliances cannot be stored for pickup without the doors or covers taken off.

*Please note, this fact sheet does not cover all requirements and situations related SPCC Planning. In addition to checking federal regulations, be sure to check your state and local regulations. For any operational questions or emergency situations, please contact your park concession specialist. For more information pertaining to compliance with emergency planning and reporting requirements, please email [cs\\_envaudits@nps.gov](mailto:cs_envaudits@nps.gov) or contact the applicable regulatory authority.*