

Commercial Services Guide

Problems With “Compostable” Plastics

In Oakland, food vendors are not allowed to use “compostable” plastic (CP) foodware, (also called “bio-plastics”, “biodegradable”, or “made from plants”). Here’s why:



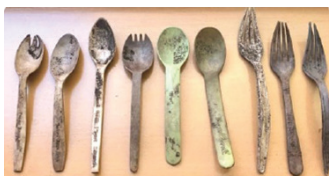
Environmental Impacts

- CPs may contain petroleum-based materials, even if the label says they’re “plant-based”.
- CPs contribute to microplastics and other toxins in our ecosystem.
- When landfilled, CPs generate methane – a powerful greenhouse gas.



Health Effects

- Food crops, such as corn and potatoes, are being turned into single-use CPs instead of feeding people or animals.
- CPs can contain harmful chemicals such as phthalates that may leach into your food, beverage, body, and the environment. Phthalates have been linked to cancer and reproductive health issues.



These “compostable” plastic utensils went through a commercial composting process with little change.
Source: StopWaste

Operational Inefficiencies

- CPs do not fully break down in commercial compost operations, leaving behind semi-processed CPs in the finished compost – **see photo to left** (not ideal for gardens).
- In Oakland, CPs are not allowed in the COMPOST because they act as contaminants. CPs are also not allowed in certified-organic COMPOST.
- In Oakland, all CPs belong in the TRASH and food vendors are not allowed to use CP foodware.

Rules are tied to the City of Oakland’s Reusables Ordinance, adopted in 2023.

Learn more here: www.OaklandRecycles.com/laws/#reusables

Featured Recycling Question: Produce Boxes - Where Does it Go?

At first glance, you would think these coated cardboard boxes would be either recyclable or compostable, however they belong in the trash.

The coating is not a natural material like wax, now-a-days a plastic coating is used making it non-compostable and non-recyclable.



Holiday Trash Spike - Plan Ahead

Order Extra Service

Trash generation rises 25% from Thanksgiving to New Year's. Plan ahead by adding an extra pickup day for trash, recycle, and compost to match your increase.

Call WMAC at 510-613-8700 for an extra pickup when you see your trash containers ready to overflow.



Avoid Contamination and Overfilled Containers

Trash items never belong in Recycle or Compost containers. Overfilled containers and contaminated recyclables and organic material cause problems for the community and environment. Please ensure your tenants and employees are following proper sorting. (See reverse side for sorting guide).

Other ways to prevent overfilling and contamination:



Install security cameras.



Post "No Dumping & "No Trespassing" signs.



Secure your area.

WMAC offers two services to reduce illegal dumping for a fee.

Contact your recycling provider for their particular options.



Request a WMAC dumpster lock and key for a fee. Contact WMAC for cost.



Request push/pull services (for a fee) to reduce any illegal dumping or improper use of the property's trash or compost containers. Contact WMAC at 510-613-8700 for cost.

Reducing Waste at Work

While recycling is great for Oakland, preventing waste by reducing and reusing can be even better. Stop waste before it starts to save your business money. There are many different approaches that can have a big payback. Consider putting some of these tried and true practices to work in your company. Visit <https://www.stopwaste.org/at-work/reducing-waste-at-work> for more details and to browse success stories:



Prevent/Reduce Packaging Waste



Auto Duplex Print



Use Reusable Foodware



Prevent Food Waste

StopWaste has up to \$2,500 to support restaurants switch to reusables.
www.stopwaste.org/reusables