

Guidance for Compost Facilities Accepting Less Than 100 m³ of Only Leaf and Yard Waste Annually

General

This guidance document outlines the requirements for establishing, operating and closing compost facilities accepting less than 100 cubic metres (m³) of only leaf and yard waste annually. These facilities are considered an acceptable solution under the Compost Facility Chapter as part of the Saskatchewan Environmental Code.

For general guidance on compost facilities, please see the Compost Facility General Guidance document.

Requirements

Facilities accepting less than 100 m³ of only leaf and yard waste annually are often located at landfills and transfer stations. The sections of the chapter that apply to these facilities are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 – Requirements and exemptions for compost facilities accepting less than 100 m³ of only leaf and yard waste annually

Requirements	Exemptions
Part 1 Section 3-1 Section 3-2	Subsection 1-8(1) Clause 1-11(4)(c)

Note: As per 1(5) of the chapter, an owner of a compost facility that is operating a permitted compost facility on the day on which this chapter comes into force is not required to comply with the siting, design and construction requirements set out in the chapter, unless the owner of the compost facility is expanding the compost facility or the operation of the compost facility on this site may cause an adverse environmental effect, but all other requirements apply.

Providing a Notification

When must facility owners provide a notification?

1. By October 1, 2025, for facilities that began operations before the chapter came into force;
2. Anytime a new facility begins operations; and
3. Anytime a facility expands its operations or its property boundary.

How do facility owners provide a notification?

Owners can provide a notification by uploading the required documents to the Environment Business Services portal. The Ministry of Environment will then provide a notification number.

What documents should facility owners upload in the portal as a notification?

Owners should upload the following documents to the portal as part of their notification: the documents listed in Table 2, descriptions of each report as found in Table 3, and The Compost Facility Notification Form.

Table 2 – Reports to submit when providing a notification to the ministry

Reports	Transitioning an existing compost facility (Until October 1, 2025)	Establishing a new compost facility or expanding an existing compost facility (anytime)
Operations Plan	Yes	Yes
Emergency Response Plan	Yes	Yes
Report required in subsection 3-1(2)	No	Yes

Is a qualified person required to prepare and certify the reports listed in Tables 2 and 3?

No. None of the reports listed in Table 2 and Table 3 are required to be certified by a qualified person.

Are owners of compost facilities located at a transfer station required to provide a notification?

Yes. Transfer Stations are governed by their own chapter under the Saskatchewan Environmental Code. Transfer station owners who wish to compost at their facility must comply with applicable sections of both chapters. If transfer station owners want to add a compost facility, or vice versa, or combine facilities at the time of initial design, they must notify the ministry about each activity separately.

Are owners of compost facilities located at a landfill required to provide a notification?

Yes. Landfills are permitted through *The Municipal Refuse Management Regulations* or *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010*. Landfill owners who wish to compost at their facilities must comply with the chapter and with the applicable landfill legislation. If landfill owners want to add a compost facility or combine facilities at the time of initial design, they must notify the Ministry of Environment about the compost facility and apply separately for landfill construction and operation permits.

Is a pile of leaves and yard waste considered a compost facility?

It depends on the situation and intent.

No – A dedicated location where residents can drop leaf and yard waste that is then taken elsewhere to be composted is not considered a compost pile or a compost facility. That drop-off location does not need to follow the chapter, and owners do not need to notify the ministry. However, the leaf and yard waste must not sit for more than 72 hours and must be promptly moved to the composting site. Failure to actively manage this process may classify the activity as waste disposal or storage, subject to appropriate regulation.

Yes – However, permanent piles of leaves and yard waste such as grass clippings (including such piles at landfills) may be considered compost facilities if the piles are actively composted, and the owners need to follow the requirements of the chapter, including providing notification.

As a reminder, there are exemptions to the chapter, such as composting at community gardens. For more information, see the Compost Facility General Guidance Document.

What will happen with existing composting facility permits?

Before the chapter came into force, most compost facilities accepting less than 100 m³ of only leaf and yard waste were regulated through *The Municipal Refuse Management Regulations* on landfill permits. Landfill permits are not affected by the chapter and continue to be active. However, they will eventually be updated to align with the new chapter by removing any references to compost management.

Environmental Monitoring

Is environmental monitoring required?

No. Facilities accepting less than 100 m³ of only leaf and yard waste annually are not required to implement an environmental monitoring plan. However, if impacts from the facility are identified, groundwater monitoring may become necessary as per the B.1.3 Corrective Action Code Chapter.

Other activities on-site (e.g. a landfill) may require a water monitoring program. In this case, the environmental monitoring required for the site could be expanded to include voluntary environmental monitoring around the compost facility.

Report Submission Schedule

Compost facility operators must submit reports to the Environment Business Services portal at specific times. Table 3 lists the reports that compost facilities need to prepare and submit to the ministry. These reports do **not** need to be certified by a qualified person.

Table 3 – Report submission schedule for compost facilities accepting less than 100 m³ of only leaf and yard waste annually

Report	Purpose of the report	Reporting schedule
With Notification and Prior to Construction (If Applicable)		
Operations plan	Describes compost facility procedures and protocols for the day-to-day operational activities, including documentation like checklists and other forms for record keeping. See subsection 3-1(5) for specific content.	Upon notification pursuant to Section 1-3, then upon request
Emergency response plan	Identifies potential emergencies and incidents at the compost facility that could harm people or cause environmental deterioration. Details the actions necessary to mitigate the impacts of those activities. This report can also be included as part of an	Upon notification pursuant to Section 1-3, then upon request

	operations plan instead of a separate plan. See subsection 3-1(6) for specific content.	
Prior to Construction (If Applicable)		
Report required in subsection 3-1(2)	Highlights the location and setbacks and describes the site-specific design required for protecting the environment. It also provides information about the operations. See subsection 3-1(2) for specific content.	Upon notification pursuant to Section 1-3 for a new or expanding facility
While in Operation		
Annual report	Provides information about the operations based on data from the previous calendar year. See subclause 1-9(e)(iv) for specific content.	Submit yearly on April 1
Prior to Closure		
Notice of closure	A written notice to the ministry containing the expected closure date. See subsection 1-11(2).	Submit at least 90 days before the closure of the facility
Closure report	Summarizes the reports and accounts of the facility during the operational phase, as well as the work completed to decommission the site, including removal of infrastructure; general site clean-up; final contours of the site and returning the site to the intended end-use; and any post-closure work. See subsection 1-11(5) for specific content.	Submit within 90 days after the closure of the compost facility
As Needed		
Notice of expansion	A written notice to the ministry containing the expected expansion date. See clause 1-9(d).	Submit at least 90 days before the expansion of the facility
Incident reporting	Informs the ministry of an incident involving spills or discharges of substances that may cause or is causing an adverse effect or meets the criteria set out in the Discharge and Discovery Reporting Standard, including unforeseen or unintended fire. See subsection 3-1(2) for specific content.	Immediately report

Constructing a Compost Facility

Before constructing a compost facility accepting less than 100 m³ of only leaf and yard waste annually, the owner must provide a report to the Minister of Environment upon notification. This report should include:

- Details about the feedstock and amendment types and quantities the compost facility will accept;
- Description of composting methods to process the feedstocks; and

- Site plan that presents the topography and surface water hydrology of the area within 1 kilometre of the proposed site and includes nearby structures and features.

Windrow dimensions and overall pile height must be managed according to the Operations Plan and Emergency Response Plan. For a full list of requirements, see subsection 3-1(2).

During this planning step, owners must also find a suitable location for the compost facility, ensuring that the setbacks listed in subsection 3-2 are met. For facilities accepting less than 100 m³ of only leaf and yard waste annually, a minimum of 300 metres is required between a compost facility and:

- A restaurant, canteen, cafeteria or any other place where food is cooked or prepared for human consumption or is consumed;
- Any motel, hotel, domestic residence or any other permanent or temporary building or residence occupied or may be occupied as a residence; and
- Any school, church or other place of worship, cemetery, heritage site, community centre, recreation facility or similar public building.

Are liner systems and retention ponds required?

No. Owners of compost facilities accepting less than 100 m³ of only leaf and yard waste annually do not need to construct liner systems and retention ponds. However, these structures can be constructed on a voluntary basis, or they may be required for other activities being managed on the property (e.g. a leachate pond for a landfill).

What is an expansion and what should be done when a compost facility expands?

When a composting facility grows in size or adds new composting areas, the owners must submit a written notice to the ministry containing the expected expansion date and a description of the expansion, including an updated site plan. Owners should ensure the expansion is in a suitable location that continues to meet the setbacks. Owners do not need to submit written justification to the ministry. The ministry may request updated operations and emergency response plans.

Following an expansion, any facility that accepts more than 100 m³ of leaf and yard waste will need to follow the sections of the chapter that apply to larger facilities. A longer list of requirements and different setbacks are applicable. More information is found in the Guidance for Compost Facilities Following an Acceptable Solution.

What happens if a facility accepts more than 100 m³ of leaf and yard waste?

Owners of larger leaf and yard waste facilities must follow the sections of the chapter that apply to every other compost facility and must apply a longer list of requirements and different setbacks. For more information, see the Guidance for Compost Facilities Following an Acceptable Solution.

Can food waste be accepted?

No. Food waste, including kitchen waste, is not allowed in a leaf and yard waste facility. Facilities accepting food waste are regulated in other sections of the chapter and require a liner or an equivalent protective barrier under the areas where the organic material is being composted. For more information, see the Guidance for Compost Facilities Following an Acceptable Solution.

Operating a Compost Facility

Operation and emergency response plans are essential to ensure operations do not cause nuisances, such as odour, dust and litter, and attraction of vermin and wildlife. They are also essential to reduce environmental risks.

Subsections 3-1(5) and (6) list the minimum requirements owners must include in both the Operations Plan and the Emergency Response Plan. The plans respond to site-specific conditions at each facility and tailor procedures to achieve the desired outcomes. While a qualified person does not need to prepare these plans, these documents must be prepared with care by those with the necessary experience to ensure risk mitigation.

Facility owners must upload the operations and emergency response plans through the online portal as a notification. In addition, an up-to-date copy of both plans must be maintained on-site, reviewed annually and amended as required. Under the chapter, the ministry will no longer routinely review these reports upon submission. Rather, ministry staff will review them when conducting an inspection or audit of a facility.

For plan examples, please see the resource section of this guidance document.

Annual Report

Every year, facility owners must submit a general annual operations report to the ministry by April 1. This report is based on the data from the previous calendar year and describes the following:

- The annual mass or volume and types of feedstock accepted at the facility;
- The annual mass or volume and types of amendment accepted at the facility;
- The annual mass or volume of compost produced by the facility;
- The annual mass or volume of compost that is used, sold or given away by the facility;
- The annual mass or volume of residuals and overs removed from the site;
- The volume and chemical analysis results of process water removed from the site; and
- A summary of public complaints received at the compost facility and the resolutions.

Record Keeping

Subsection 1-8(2) of the chapter outlines the general records the owner must retain of a compost facility over its lifetime, while subsection 3-1(3) outlines the general records the owner must retain for at least three (3) years from the date they were created. Table 4 summarizes the requirements for record-keeping at a compost facility accepting less than 100 m³ of only leaf and yard waste annually.

When the compost facility changes ownership, the new owner will receive all the records that must be maintained according to this chapter.

Upon closure of the facility, all records that were kept for three (3) years and that have not yet expired must be kept for an extra three (3) years. All records that were kept for the lifetime of the facility, including the closure report, must be kept and retained for seven (7) years after closure.

Table 4 – Summary of required record-keeping based on retention times

Subsection 3-1(3)	Subsection 1-8(2)
Records to be kept for three (3) years	Records to be kept for the lifetime of the facility
Description and characterization of each of the feedstock and amendment types received and processed	Up-to-date site plan showing all major features of the compost facility
Annual mass or volume and types of feedstock accepted at the facility	Inspection records or compliance audits
Annual mass or volume and types of amendments accepted at the facility	Any discharges or discoveries
Annual mass or volume of compost produced by the facility	Any releases not covered under discharges or discoveries
Annual mass or volume of compost that is used, sold or given away by the facility	Environmental risks
Annual mass or volume of residuals and overs removed from the site	A verified monitoring plan if implemented at the site
	Public complaints and resolutions
	Any regulatory documents for the compost facility
	A copy of any notification, environmental protection plan, application or proposal submitted to the Minister, along with related correspondence
	Construction documents

Closure of a Compost Facility

A compost facility must close when:

- The owner no longer intends to accept feedstock or amendment;
- No materials have been accepted for at least 12 consecutive months; or
- The Minister issued a written request for closure.

Closure Process

- 1. Notification:** Provide written notice to the Ministry of Environment at least 90 days before closure.
- 2. Site security:** Take steps to prevent trespassing, illegal dumping and vandalism. Remove items not needed for the function of the site within 30 days.
- 3. Closure report:** Submit a closure report within 90 days, indicating that the site has been returned to an appropriate end land use and there are no known or suspected adverse effects from the operation of the compost facility. If adverse effects are identified, further site reclamation work may be required as per the impacted sites process. The report must include the requirements listed in 1-11(5) of the chapter.
- 4. Record-keeping:** After closure, facility owners are required to retain documentation. Please see the record-keeping section for more information.

Resources

[Compost Facility General Guidance](#)

[Guidance for Compost Facilities Following an Acceptable Solution](#)

[Guidance for Compost Facilities Following an Alternative Solution](#)

[Compost Facilities Acceptable Feedstock and Amendment Standard](#)

[Environmental online business portal](#)

[Transfer stations](#)

[Solid waste management facilities](#)

[Environmentally impacted sites](#)

Five chapters of the Saskatchewan Environmental Code are used to manage environmentally impacted sites:

- [Discharge and Discovery Reporting Chapter](#)
- [Site Assessment Chapter](#)
- [Corrective Action Plan Chapter](#)
- [Transfer of Responsibility for an Environmentally Impacted Site Chapter](#)
- [Substance Characterization Chapter](#)

[National Fire Code of Canada](#)

[The Compost Council of Canada](#)

[CCME Guidelines for Compost Quality](#)

[Best Practices for Operating an Aerated Windrow Composting Facility](#). This document contains examples of operation logs for reporting and tracking information, as well as recipes and instructions for operating a windrow facility. These resources can help owners to prepare their own operations plan.

This [emergency response plan](#) prepared by SWANA Northern Lights for landfills could be adapted for compost facilities.

The ministry also prepared samples of documents that could be used as broader sources of inspiration when preparing compost facilities operation and emergency response plans:

- [Sample Landfill Operations Plan](#)
- [Sample Landfill Emergency Response Plan](#)

Contact

If you require assistance, please call the Ministry of Environment's Public Inquiries Centre at 1-800-567-4224 (toll-free in North America) or 306-787-2584. A ministry official will connect you with an environmental protection officer.

Email: Centre.Inquiry@gov.sk.ca