A-24: Commercial Composting

Stormwater runoff (rainwater and snow melt) is the largest source of pollution to our lakes, streams and Puget Sound. King County requires businesses to implement measures to protect our shared waters. If the requirements below do not prevent pollution, additional measures are necessary.

The following best management practices (BMPs) apply to commercial receiving and composting wastes.

In addition to other King County requirements, all commercial composting operations must comply with Public Health-Seattle and King County requirements. Commercial composting operations require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit and/or a State Waste Discharge permit from the Washington State Department of Ecology.

Required BMPs

- All composting facilities shall obtain the appropriate state and local permits. Contact Public Health – Seattle and King County for more information.
- Screen incoming waste for dangerous materials and solid waste. These materials may not be accepted for composting and must be properly disposed of.
- Locate composting areas on impervious surfaces.
- Drain all leachate from composting operations to the sanitary sewer, holding tank, or on-site treatment system. Leachate may not go to the stormwater drainage system, surface waters or groundwater.
- Collect the leachate with a dike or berm, or with intercepting drains placed on the down slope side of the compost area.
- Direct outside runoff away from the composting areas.
- Collect runoff from uncovered finished compost and blending areas and discharge to the sanitary sewer. If that is not feasible, then discharge to surface or ground waters according to the condition of a Washington State Industrial Stormwater General or Individual permit or a State Waste Discharge Permit.
- See Washington Administrative Code 173-350-220 (Composting Facilities) for additional requirements.
- Stormwater runoff from composting areas may not be discharged to underground injection control (UIC) wells. For additional information, refer to BMP activity sheet A-57: Underground Injection Control (UIC).

Required Routine Maintenance

- Clean up debris from yard areas regularly to prevent stormwater contamination.

Supplemental BMPs

- Install catch basin inserts to collect excess sediment and debris if necessary. Inspect and maintain catch basin inserts regularly to ensure they are working correctly.

- Cover compost storage areas.

Additional Information

- Potential pollutants can include: fecal coliform bacteria, metals, nutrients, oxygen demanding substances, PCBs, sediment, and other pollutants.
- *Stormwater Pollution Prevention Manual*, Chapter 3: Commercial and Multifamily BMPs
    - A-4: Outdoor Storage of Soil, Sand and Other Erodible Materials
    - A-57: Underground Injection Control (UIC)
- *Stormwater Pollution Prevention Manual*, Chapter 5: Information Sheets
    - Catch Basin Inserts
    - Containment
    - Disposal
- Contact Public Health-Seattle and King County at 206-263-9566
- Washington Administrative Code 173-350-220 (Composting Facilities)
- Washington State Department of Ecology's *Siting and Operating Composting Facilities in Washington State: Good Management Practices* https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/1107005.pdf

For more information or assistance contact the King County Stormwater Services at 206–477–4811 and visit kingcounty.gov/stormwater.