

GLOSSARY

Aerobic composting - a method of composting organic wastes using bacteria that need oxygen. This requires that the waste be exposed to air, either via turning or by forcing air through perforated pipes that pass through the material.

Anaerobic digestion - a method of composting that does not require oxygen. This composting method produces methane. Also known as anaerobic composting.

Ash - the non-combustible, solid byproducts of incineration or other combustion process.

Autoclaving - sterilisation via a pressurised, high-temperature steam process.

Baghouse - a combustion plant emission control device that consists of an array of fabric filters through which flue gases pass in an incinerator flue. Particles are trapped and thus prevented from passing into the atmosphere.

Basel Convention - an international agreement on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal, drawn up in March 1989 in Basel, Switzerland, with over 100 countries as signatories.

Biodegradable material - any organic material that can be broken down by microorganisms into simpler, more stable compounds. Most organic wastes (e.g., food, paper) are biodegradable.

Bottom ash - relatively coarse, non-combustible, generally toxic residue of incineration that accumulates on the grate of a furnace.

Bulky waste - large wastes, such as appliances, furniture, and trees and branches, that cannot be handled by normal MSW processing methods.

Cell - the basic unit by which a landfill is developed. It is the general area where incoming waste is tipped, spread, compacted, and covered.

Cleaner production - processes designed to reduce the wastes generated by production.

Co-disposal - the disposal of different types of waste in one area of a landfill or dump. For instance, sewage sludges may be disposed of with regular solid wastes.

Cogeneration - production of both electricity and steam from one facility, from the same fuel source.

Collection - the process of picking up wastes from residences, businesses, or a collection point, loading them into a vehicle, and transporting them to a processing, transfer, or disposal site.

Combustibles - burnable materials in the waste stream, including paper, plastics, wood, and food and garden wastes.

Combustion - in MSWM, the burning of materials in an incinerator.

Commingled - mixed recyclables that are collected together after having been separated from mixed MSW.

Communal collection - a system of collection in which individuals bring their waste directly to a central point, from which it is collected.

Compactor vehicle - a collection vehicle using high-power mechanical or hydraulic equipment to reduce the volume of solid waste.

Composite liner - a liner system for a landfill consisting of an engineered soil layer and a synthetic sheet of material.

Compost - the material resulting from composting. Compost, also called humus, is a soil conditioner.

Composting - biological decomposition of solid organic materials by bacteria, fungi, and other organisms into a soil-like product.

Construction and demolition debris -waste generated by construction and demolition of buildings, such as bricks, concrete, drywall, lumber, miscellaneous metal parts and sheets, packaging materials, etc.

Controlled dump - a planned landfill that incorporates to some extent some of the features of a sanitary landfill: siting with respect to hydrogeological suitability, grading, compaction in some cases, leachate control, partial gas management, regular (not usually daily) cover, access control, basic recordkeeping, and controlled scavenging.

Curing - allowing partially composted materials to reside in a pile for a specified period of time as part of the maturing process in composting.

Disposal - the final handling of solid waste, following collection, processing, or incineration. Disposal most often means placement of wastes in a dump or a landfill.

Diversion rate - the proportion of waste material diverted for recycling, composting, or reuse and away from landfilling.

Drop-off centre - an area or facility for receiving compostables or recyclables that are dropped off by waste generators.

Dump - see *Controlled dump* and *Open dump*.

Emissions - gases released into the atmosphere.

Energy recovery - the process of extracting useful energy from waste, typically from the heat produced by incineration or via methane gas from landfills.

Environmental impact assessment (EIA) -an evaluation designed to identify and predict the impact of an action or a project on the environment and human health and well being. Can include risk assessment: as a component, along with economic and land use assessment.

Environmental risk assessment (EnRA) - an evaluation of the interactions of agents, humans, and ecological resources. Comprised of human health risk assessment and ecological risk assessment, typically evaluating the probabilities and magnitudes of harm that could come from environmental contaminants.

Fabric filter - see *Baghouse*.

Flaring - the burning of landfill gas/methane captured and emitted from collection pipes at a landfill.

Fluidised-bed incinerator - a type of incinerator in which the stoker grate is replaced by a bed of limestone or sand that can withstand high temperatures. The heating of the bed and the high air velocities used cause the bed to bubble, which gives rise to the term “fluidised”.

Fly ash - the highly toxic particulate matter captured from the flue gas of an incinerator by the air pollution control system.

Garbage - in everyday usage, refuse in general. Some MSWM manuals use garbage to mean “food wastes”, although this usage is not common.

Groundwater - water beneath the earth’s surface that fills underground pockets (known as aquifers), supplying wells and springs.

Hazardous waste - waste that is reactive, toxic, corrosive, or otherwise dangerous to living things and/or the environment. Many industrial byproducts are hazardous.

Heavy metals - metals of high atomic weight and density, such as mercury, lead, and cadmium, that are toxic to living organisms.

Household hazardous waste - products used in residences, such as paints and some cleaning compounds, that are toxic to living organisms and/or the environment.

Humus - the end product of composting, also called compost.

Incineration - the process of combusting solid waste under controlled, approximately stoichiometric conditions to reduce its weight and volume, and often to produce energy.

Informal sector - the part of an economy that is characterised by private, usually small-scale, labour-intensive, largely unregulated, and unregistered manufacturing or provision of services.

Inorganic waste - waste composed of material other than plant or animal matter, such as sand, dust, glass, and many synthetics.

Integrated solid waste management - coordinated use of a set of waste management methods, each of which can play a role in an overall MSWM plan.

International NGO - an organisation that has an international headquarters and branches in major world regions, often with the purpose of undertaking development assistance.

In-vessel composting - composting in an enclosed vessel or drum with a controlled internal environment, mechanical mixing, and aeration.

Itinerant waste buyer - a person who moves around the streets buying (or bartering for) reusable and recyclable materials.

Kerbside collection - collection of compostables, recyclables, or trash at the edge of a sidewalk in front of a residence or shop.

Landfill gases - gases arising from the decomposition of organic wastes; principally methane, carbon dioxide, and hydrogen sulphide. Such gases may cause explosions at landfills.

Landfilling - the final disposal of solid waste by placing it in a controlled fashion in a place intended to be permanent. The term is applied to both controlled dumps and sanitary landfills.

Leachate - liquid (which may be partly produced by decomposition of organic matter) that has seeped through a landfill or a compost pile and has accumulated bacteria and other possibly harmful dissolved or suspended materials. If uncontrolled, leachate can contaminate both groundwater and surface water.

Leachate pond - a pond or tank constructed at a landfill to receive the leachate from the area. Usually the pond is designed to provide some treatment of the leachate, by allowing settlement of solids or by aeration to promote biological processes.

Lift - the completed layer of compacted waste in a cell at a landfill.

Liner - a protective layer, made of soil and/or synthetic materials, installed along the bottom and sides of a landfill to prevent or reduce the flow of leachate into the environment.

Manual landfill - a landfill in which most operations are carried out without the use of mechanised equipment.

Market waste - primarily organic waste, such as leaves, skins, and unsold food, discarded at or near food markets.

Massburn incinerator - a type of incinerator in which solid waste is burned without prior sorting or processing.

Materials recovery - obtaining materials that can be reused or recycled.

Materials recovery facility (MRF) - a facility for separating commingled recyclables by manual or mechanical means. Some MRFs are designed to separate recyclables from mixed MSW. MRFs then bale and market the recovered materials.

Methane - an odourless, colourless, flammable, explosive gas, CH₄, produced by anaerobically decomposing MSW at landfills.

Microenterprise - a synonym for small-scale enterprise: a business, often family-based or a cooperative, that usually employs fewer than ten people and may operate “informally”.

Mixed waste - unsorted materials that have been discarded into the waste stream.

Modular incinerator - a relatively small type of prefabricated solid waste combustion unit.

Monofill - a landfill intended for one type of waste only.

MSW - municipal solid waste.

MSWM - municipal solid waste management.

Municipal solid waste - all solid waste generated in an area except industrial and agricultural wastes. Sometimes includes construction and demolition debris and other special wastes that may enter the municipal waste stream. Generally excludes hazardous wastes, except to the extent that they enter the municipal waste stream. Sometimes defined to mean all solid wastes that a city authority accepts responsibility for managing in some way.

Municipal solid waste management - planning and implementation of systems to handle MSW.

NGO – Non-governmental organisation. May be used to refer to a range of organisations, from small community groups, through national and international organisations. Frequently these are not-for-profit organisations.

Nightsoil - human excreta.

NIMBY - “Not In My Back Yard”. An expression of resident opposition to the siting of a solid waste facility based on the particular location proposed.

Open dump - an unplanned “landfill” that incorporates few if any of the characteristics of a controlled landfill. There is typically no leachate control, no access control, no cover, no management, and many scavengers.

Organic waste - technically, waste containing carbon, including paper, plastics, wood, food wastes, and yard wastes. In practice in MSWM, the term is often used in a more restricted sense to mean material that is more directly derived from plant or animal sources, and which can generally be decomposed by microorganisms.

Pathogen - an organism capable of causing disease.

Pollution - the contamination of soil, water, or the atmosphere by the discharge of waste or other offensive materials.

Post-consumer materials - materials that a consumer has finished using, which the consumer may sell, give away, or discard as wastes.

Primary material - a commercial material produced from virgin materials used for the manufacture of basic products. Examples include wood pulp, iron ore, and silica sand.

Privatisation - a general term referring to a range of contracts and other agreements that transfer the provision of some services or production from the public sector to private firms or organisations.

Processing - preparing MSW materials for subsequent use or management, using processes such as baling, magnetic separation, crushing, and shredding. The term is also sometimes used to mean separation of recyclables from mixed MSW.

Producer responsibility - a system in which a producer of products or services takes responsibility for the waste that results from the products or services marketed, by reducing materials used in production, making repairable or recyclable goods, and/or reducing packaging.

Putrescible - subject to decomposition or decay. Usually used in reference to food wastes and other organic wastes that decay quickly.

Pyrolysis - chemical decomposition of a substance by heat in the absence of oxygen, resulting in the production of various hydrocarbon gases and carbon-like residue.

Recyclables - items that can be reprocessed into feedstock for new products. Common examples are paper, glass, aluminium, corrugated cardboard, and plastic containers.

Recycling - the process of transforming materials into raw materials for manufacturing new products, which may or may not be similar to the original product.

Refuse - a term often used interchangeably with solid waste.

Refuse-derived fuel (RDF) – solid fuel produced from MSW that has undergone processing. Processing can include separation of recyclables and non-combustible materials, shredding, size reduction, and pelletizing.

Resource recovery - the extraction and utilisation of materials and energy from wastes.

Reuse - the use of a product more than once in its original form, for the same or a new purpose.

Rubbish - a -general term for solid waste. Sometimes used to exclude food wastes and ashes.

Sanitary landfill - an engineered method of disposing of solid waste on land, in a manner that meets most of the standard specifications, including sound siting, extensive site preparation, proper leachate and gas management and monitoring, compaction, daily and final cover, complete access control, and recordkeeping.

Scavenger - a person who picks out recyclables from mixed waste wherever it may be temporarily accessible or disposed of.

Scrubber - emission control device in an incinerator, used primarily to control acid gases, but also to remove some heavy metals.

Secondary material- a material recovered from post-consumer wastes for use in place of a primary material in manufacturing a product.

Secure landfill - a disposal facility designed to permanently isolate wastes from the environment. This entails burial of the wastes in a landfill that includes clay and/or synthetic liners, leachate collection, gas collection (in cases where gas is generated), and an impermeable cover.

Septage - sludge removed from a septic tank (a chamber that holds human excreta).

Setout container - a box or bucket used for residential waste that is placed outside for collection.

Sewage sludge - a semi-liquid residue that settles to the bottom of canals and pipes carrying sewage or industrial wastewaters, or in the bottom of tanks used in treating wastewaters.

Site remediation - treatment of a contaminated site by removing contaminated solids or liquids or treating them onsite.

Source reduction - the design, manufacture, acquisition, and reuse of materials so as to minimise the quantity and/or toxicity of waste produced.

Source separation - setting aside of compostable and recyclable materials from the waste stream before they are collected with other MSW, to facilitate reuse, recycling, and composting.

Special wastes - wastes that are ideally considered to be outside of the MSW stream, but which sometimes enter it and must often be dealt with by municipal authorities. These include household hazardous waste, medical waste, construction and demolition debris, war and earthquake debris, tires, oils, wet batteries, sewage sludge, human excreta, stoichiometric-condition slaughterhouse waste, and industrial waste. In combustion chemistry, the condition whereupon the quantity of oxygen provided to the combustion process is exactly that needed to completely oxidise all carbon in the fuel to carbon dioxide.

Subsidy - direct or indirect payment from government to businesses, citizens, or institutions to encourage a desired activity.

Tipping fee - a fee for unloading or dumping waste at a landfill, transfer station, incinerator, or recycling facility.

Tipping floor - unloading area for vehicles that are delivering MSW to a transfer station, processing facility, or incinerator.

Transfer - the act of moving waste from a collection vehicle to a larger transport vehicle.

Transfer point - a designated point, often at the edge of a neighbourhood, where small collection vehicles transfer waste to larger vehicles for transport to disposal sites.

Transfer station - a major facility at which MSW from collection vehicles is consolidated into loads that are transported by larger trucks or other means to more distant final disposal facilities, typically landfills.

Transition countries - the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union that are in various stages of restructuring their economies. The changes involve a move away from being substantially state-run toward a variety of new configurations, ranging from moderate economic liberalisation to a significant dismantling of the state's role in the economy.

Vectors - organisms that carry disease-causing pathogens. At landfills, rodents, flies, and birds are the main vectors that spread pathogens beyond the landfill site.

Vermiculture - see *Worm culture*.

Virgin materials - any basic material for industrial processes that has not previously been used, for example, wood pulp trees, iron ore, crude oil, bauxite.

Waste characterisation study - an analysis of samples from a waste stream to determine its composition.

Waste collector - a person employed by a local authority or a private firm to collect waste from residences, businesses, and community bins.

Waste dealer - an intermediary who buys recyclable materials from waste generators and itinerant buyers and sells them, after sorting and some processing, to wholesale brokers or recycling industries.

Waste management hierarchy - a ranking of waste management operations according to their environmental or energy benefits. The purpose of the waste management hierarchy is to make waste management practices as environmentally sound as possible.

Waste picker – see *Scavenger*.

Waste reduction - all means of reducing the amount of waste that is produced initially and that must be collected by solid waste authorities. This ranges from legislation and product design to local programs designed to keep recyclables and compostables out of the final waste stream.

Waste stream - the total flow of waste from a community, region, or facility.

Waste-to-energy (WTE) plant - a facility that uses solid waste materials (processed or raw) to produce energy. WTE plants include incinerators that produce steam for district heating or industrial use, or that generate electricity; they also include facilities that convert landfill gas to electricity.

Water table - level below the earth's surface at which the ground becomes saturated with water.

Wetland - an area that is regularly wet or flooded and has a water table that stands at or above the land surface for at least part of the year.

Windrow - an elongated pile of aerobically composting materials that are turned periodically to expose the materials to oxygen and to control the temperature to promote biodegradation.

Working face - the length and width of the area in which waste is being deposited at a landfill. Also known as the tipping face.

Worm castings - the material produced from the digestive tracts of worms as they live in earth or compost piles. The castings are rich in nitrates, potassium, phosphorus, calcium, and magnesium.

Worm culture - a relatively cool, aerobic composting process that uses worms and microorganisms. Also known as vermiculture.

Yard waste - leaves, grass clippings, prunings, and other natural organic matter discarded from yards and gardens.