



Metro Solid Waste Regulatory Guidance Bulletin

GB 1

Revised August 2011

Management of Putrescible Waste at Material Recovery Facilities

Metro's solid waste regulatory system supports the region's sustainability and waste reduction goals by ensuring that waste generated in the Metro region is delivered to appropriate, safe, and well-operated reloading and processing facilities. Metro routinely coordinates and consults with local governments and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) about facilities, whether they are located inside or outside the region.

Introduction

The purpose of this guidance bulletin is to provide an explanation of how Metro implements its putrescible waste policy at solid waste material recovery facilities (MRFs). The proper classification and management of putrescible waste are important responsibilities at solid waste facilities regulated by Metro. Making accurate distinctions between waste that has a detectable "putrescible" content and waste that is primarily "non-putrescible" affects the entire solid waste system, individual facility operations and material recovery standards. Individual License and Franchise documents also address specific requirements regarding the management of waste types.

Definitions

The following definitions from Metro Code Section 5.01.010 will be useful in understanding and applying the concepts in the Bulletin. The entire Metro Code can be accessed at www.oregonmetro.gov.

Non-putrescible waste means any waste that contains no more than trivial amounts of putrescible materials or minor amounts of putrescible materials contained in such a way that they can be easily separated from the remainder of the load without causing contamination of the load. This category includes construction waste and demolition waste but excludes Cleanup Materials Contaminated by Hazardous Substances, source-separated recyclable materials, special waste, land clearing debris and yard debris.

Putrescible means rapidly decomposable by microorganisms, which may give rise to foul smelling, offensive products during such decomposition or which is capable of attracting or providing food for birds and potential disease vectors such as rodents and flies.

Putrescible waste means waste containing putrescible material.

Solid waste means all putrescible and non-putrescible wastes, including without limitation, garbage, rubbish, refuse, ashes, waste paper and cardboard; discarded or abandoned vehicles or parts thereof; sewage sludge, septic tank and cesspool pumpings or other sludges; commercial, industrial, demolition and construction waste; discarded home and industrial appliances; asphalt, broken concrete and bricks; manure, vegetable or animal solid and semi-solid wastes, dead animals; infectious waste as defined in ORS 459.386; and other such wastes, including without limitation cleanup materials contaminated with hazardous substances, commingled recyclable material, petroleum contaminated soil, special waste, source-separated recyclable material, land clearing debris and yard debris; but the term does not include:

1. Hazardous wastes as defined in ORS 466.005;
2. Radioactive wastes as defined in ORS 469.300;
3. Materials used for fertilizer, soil conditioning, humus restoration, or for other productive purposes or which are salvageable for these purposes and are used on land in agricultural operations and the growing or harvesting of crops and the raising of fowls or animals, provided the materials are used at or below agronomic application rates; or
4. Explosives.

Waste means any material considered to be useless, unwanted or discarded by the person who last used the material for its intended and original purpose.

General Discussion

Proper classification of solid waste as either putrescible or non-putrescible is an important distinction to make at Metro-regulated solid waste facilities. However, it is often difficult to accurately classify mixed solid waste loads that contain quantities of both putrescible and non-putrescible waste. The quantity of putrescible waste in a waste load is the single most important consideration in accurately classifying a load at a MRF.

Loads of non-putrescible waste may become contaminated by any number of occurrences, creating a problem for the facilities that accept the loads. Drop boxes from construction sites are generally classified as non-putrescible waste because they contain primarily construction and demolition debris. Occasionally these loads may become contaminated with putrescible waste such as when workers throw their household garbage or lunches into the load.

MRFs Co-Located with Transfer Stations

MRFs co-located with a transfer station are facilities authorized to receive both putrescible and non-putrescible waste. These facilities may choose to perform material recovery on both waste types. However, putrescible and non-putrescible waste must be managed separately during all tipping, recovery and transfer activities. The proper management and classification of waste load types remains an important consideration at these facilities for many of the reasons discussed above.

Stand Alone MRFs

Stand alone MRFs are solid waste facilities that accept only non-putrescible solid waste and perform material recovery to separate marketable and disposable components. Metro Code, DEQ regulations and solid waste licenses/permits prohibit these MRFs from receiving any putrescible waste. Obviously, this is a stringent standard to meet since any load may contain a banana peel or apple core. As a way to impose this standard in a reasonable and practical way, the Metro Code defines non-putrescible waste loads as those that contain no more than *trivial* amounts of putrescible material. This means that stand alone MRFs can manage trivial amounts of putrescible waste, in accordance with their Operating Plans, without being subject to regulatory enforcement.

Trivial Amounts

The term “trivial amounts” was included in the definition of non-putrescible waste in order to provide a reasonable standard for making judgments in the field. It was also intended to replace the past practice of using unofficial standards for determining putrescible content. The dictionary definition of trivial includes such adjectives and synonyms as “insignificant,” “of little worth or importance,” “negligible,” “measly,” and “inconsequential.” Because of ambiguity over the application of this qualitative standard, Metro has found it necessary to move to a more quantitative baseline standard. Metro has developed a per-load quantitative general standard for determining “trivial amounts.” A load of non-putrescible waste may not contain more than five percent (5%) by weight, and not exceed a maximum of 300 pounds of putrescible waste.

Quantitative Standard for Determining whether more than Trivial Amounts of Putrescible Waste are contained in Solid Waste Load			
Weight of Incoming Load (in tons)	Weight of Incoming Load (in pounds)	5% Trivial Standard	Not to Exceed Trivial Standard
.05 tons	100 pounds	5 pounds	NA
.25 tons	500 pounds	25 pounds	NA
.50 tons	1,000 pounds	50 pounds	NA
1 ton	2,000 pounds	100 pounds	NA
1.75 tons	3,500 pounds	175 pounds	NA
3 tons	6,000 pounds	300 pounds	300 pounds
4 tons	8,000 pounds	NA	300 pounds
5 tons	10,000 pounds	NA	300 pounds
7 tons	14,000 pounds	NA	300 pounds
8 tons	16,000 pounds	NA	300 pounds
10 tons	20,000 pounds	NA	300 pounds

Procedure for Managing Putrescible Waste

All Metro-authorized stand alone MRFs must have a Metro-approved Operating Plan in place and follow it. Operating Plans should specifically include:

1. Procedures for notifying generators or collectors not to deliver prohibited wastes to the facility;
2. Procedures for inspecting incoming loads for prohibited wastes;
3. Procedures for accepting or rejecting loads;
4. Procedures for recording and reporting putrescible waste and rejected loads to Metro;
5. Procedures for providing reasonable notice and justification for refusing service to any hauler;
6. Procedures for managing putrescible waste inadvertently received at facility; and
7. Procedures for minimizing odors and responding to odor complaints.

Other Management Requirements

1. MRFs that are only authorized to receive non-putrescible waste must reject and return all loads that contain more than trivial amounts of putrescible waste.
2. Any quantities of putrescible waste that exceed the “trivial” standard and which are inadvertently received at a MRF should be placed in watertight, covered containers. This waste should be collected by a local hauler or delivered directly to a Metro-authorized transfer station.
3. All waste should be managed so that no odor, nuisance, or vector problems are created. Any complaints should be immediately logged and addressed in accordance with Metro-approved Operating Plan.

Containment and Management of Putrescible Waste

One of Metro’s primary regulatory concerns is that a stand alone MRF is not capable of properly managing large quantities of putrescible waste. While trivial amounts of putrescible waste received at a MRF can generally be managed along with the non-putrescible waste residual, the concern arises when a facility is forced to accumulate a large stockpile of putrescible waste. Specific requirements for the management of trivial amounts of inadvertently received putrescible waste can be found in individual Metro authorization documents.

Repeat Putrescible Loads

Metro recognizes any individual load may contain trivial amounts of putrescible waste. However, Metro may choose to enforce a more stringent standard when loads from a single generator continually contain putrescible waste. In these cases, Metro expects the subject facility to work with the generator and collector to establish alternative disposal options for the putrescible waste.

If you have questions or need additional information regarding this guidance bulletin, please contact Warren Johnson, Metro Solid Waste Compliance & Cleanup Division, at 503-797-1836 or warren.johnson@oregonmetro.gov.

This regulatory guidance bulletin is advisory only, and is intended to provide assistance in understanding certain Metro solid waste requirements. The information contained in the bulletin is not an administrative procedure, rule or performance standard as set forth in Metro Code Section 5.01.132.

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