

Plastic bags are banned

from curbside yard waste collection
beginning January 1, 2010



Learn how to properly
dispose of your yard waste
on the reverse side.

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How to dispose of yard waste

Yes



Compostable bag • Yard waste cart • Paper (kraft) bag

No



The new State law affects residents in Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin (excluding City of Minneapolis), Ramsey, Scott and Washington Counties.

Find compostable bags and paper (kraft) bags at home improvement, grocery and hardware stores. Contact your waste service provider about the availability of yard waste carts.

For more information on compostable bag requirements and how they affect you, visit RethinkRecycling.com.

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Your go-to guide for waste and recycling in the Twin Cities.



Solid
Waste
Management
Coordinating
Board

New Law on Yard and Organic Waste Collection

Beginning January 1, 2010, residents in the Twin Cities area who bag their yard and organic waste will be required to put their waste out for pickup in compostable bags – either paper bags or compostable plastic bags. This will affect residents in the following counties: Anoka, Carver, Hennepin (excluding the City of Minneapolis), Ramsey, Scott, and Washington.

Yard waste carts and paper bags have been around for years, and the technology of compostable plastic bags isn't new -- just this rule is (except for Dakota County, which has been requiring compostable bags for years). Using paper and compostable plastic bags rather than traditional black plastic bags will greatly reduce the amount of plastic being sent to local composting facilities. Because local composters will have less plastic to screen out of their finished compost, processing costs will be reduced and the quality of the finished compost will be enhanced.

Compostable plastic bags are distinct from regular plastic bags because they are usually clear or a green-tinted translucent color. Most home improvement, grocery, and hardware stores now carry them. If you don't see them at your local store, ask an employee; many store owners are just learning of this requirement also and may appreciate the customer request.

As of January 1, 2010, your yard waste pick-up service will no longer take the non-compostable plastic bags that you worked so hard to fill – and it's illegal to place yard waste in the trash so be sure to use compostable bags.

For more information on the new compostable plastic bag requirements and how they will affect you, visit RethinkRecycling.com.

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Campaign Materials –FAQ

Compostable Bags FAQ

1. Who must use compostable bags and when?

Beginning January 1, 2010, residents of Anoka, Carver, Hennepin (excluding City of Minneapolis residents), Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties who bag their yard waste or other compostable waste will be required to put their waste out for pick up in compostable bags – either paper bags or compostable plastic bags. City of Minneapolis residents are not required to use compostable bags until January 1, 2013. Residents of Dakota County are already required to use compostable bags for yard waste pick up.

This rule will not impact your service if you currently collect your yard waste or other compostable waste in a cart, or you take your yard waste to a collection facility and remove the waste from the bags yourself. Contact your local hauler or yard waste collection facility for specific details.

2. What is a compostable bag?

Compostable bags include paper Kraft bags (large brown paper bags) or compostable plastic bags. Compostable plastic bags are usually clear or tinted a translucent shade of green, white, or pink; however the color is not the sure way of determining the compostibility of a plastic bag. Compostable plastic bags should clearly state that they meet ASTM D6400 standards for composting and that they are “compostable”. Bags marked “biodegradable” or “degradable” do not meet the state law.

The shelf life of compostable bags is approximately 1 to 3 years. Make sure to review the label for the product specific shelf life and purchase accordingly.

3. How can I tell the difference between a compostable plastic bag and traditional black plastic bag?

Look for the word “compostable” on the box. The words “lawn and leaf” or “yard waste” do not guarantee that the bag is compostable and acceptable to use under the new rule. Visually compostable plastic bags are usually clear or tinted a translucent shade of green, white, or pink, compared to traditional black plastic bags.

4. Why is using compostable bags important?

Once your yard waste or source separated compostable waste is picked up, it is delivered to a compost facility. Waste at composting facilities must be debagged, which increases costs and the chance that plastic bags will be blowing around on site causing

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a safety hazard. Some compost sites shred the bag and its contents and attempt to screen the torn pieces of plastics later. Unfortunately not all plastic shreds can be screened out, which reduces the value and quality of the finished compost.

5. Where can I buy compostable bags?

Most home improvement, grocery and hardware stores now carry compostable bags. If you don't see them at your local store, ask an employee. Many store owners are just learning of this requirement and may appreciate the customer request.

Compostable bags tend to cost slightly more than the traditional black plastic bags here in Minnesota; however, given the new demand, prices may be lowered.

6. When do I have to use compostable bags?

Compostable bags are required for use with yard waste and compost collection. So any yard waste, food waste, organics, or other compostable material must be placed in a compostable bag when collected at the curb.

7. What are the benefits of using compost?

Benefits of using compost include:

- Saving natural resources;
- Reducing soil erosion;
- Preventing polluted storm water runoff from contaminating our wetlands, lakes, and streams; and
- Providing a valuable soil amendment product that can be used to enrich the soils of our community.

8. What happens if I do not use a compostable bag?

If you do not use a compostable bag for yard waste or other compostable waste, your hauler will not collect your waste. Compost drop-off sites will also require the material to be removed from non-compostable bags and you will be required to take the bag with you.