

## Technology Brief

### WILL COMPOSTING WORK FOR US? A DECISION GUIDE

The Clean Washington Center developed this guide to help managers and decision-makers evaluate the feasibility of composting food scraps and other organic residuals. In its approach, the guide targets the following types of businesses or organizations:

- Food processors or wholesalers;
- Hospitals, group homes, and other institutions;
- Schools and universities;
- Corrections facilities;
- Military bases;
- Hotels, camps, and resorts; and
- Farms (especially as part of other facilities).

Users of this guide would likely be facility manager, operations manager, materials manager, solid waste or recycling coordinator, environmental or safety manager. In a small organization, an individual may simply have one or more of those job duties without a specific title. Others who might benefit from using this guide include solid waste and recycling managers, consultants, and equipment vendors.

Experience with composting is not necessary to use this guide. Some readers will have little or no experience with composting. Others will have some experience composting leaves and garden debris at home, or they may even have tried composting at their facilities. Finally, some will have experience separating materials for collection and transport to a commercial compost facility.

#### Key Words

**Materials:** Institutionally generated organics

**Technologies:** Composting

**Market Goals:** Create value for organics waste streams.

**Abstract:** Evaluating and prioritizing methods for compost facilities management of process and non-process runoff.

The guide was developed as an easy-to-follow, hands-on approach to help managers decide whether composting at their facility would be compatible with the budget, space, and other resources they have available. In other words, it will help you answer the question: Will composting work for us? The guide organizes technical information in a step-by-step format and uses information you provide to match your goals for waste diversion, cost savings, or end uses for compost to the many kinds of composting technologies available.

The guide provides information needed to analyze and evaluate potential costs and benefits of composting at a wide variety of institutions and sites. It starts by asking you to gather information that will show how much money could be saved by composting at your facility. Further, the guide will show you how to evaluate advantages and disadvantages of different levels of composting

technology and develop recommendations about specific systems or methods. The guide also provides lists of general resources for further study.

The guide **does not** teach composting but does include an introductory section about composting. Many excellent how to composting guides have already been written, so the last section provides references to additional sources of detailed information about the science and art of composting.

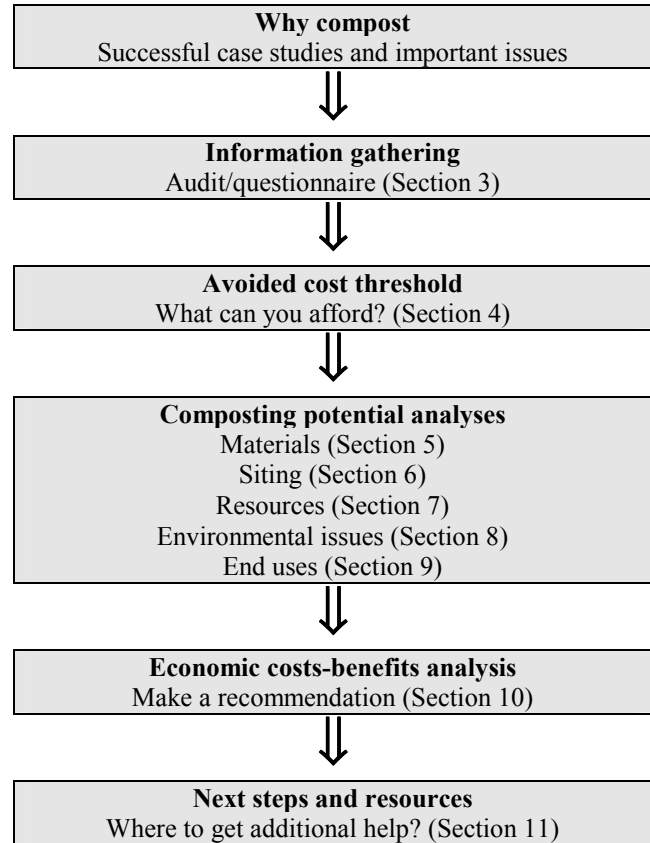
The guide **does not** promote or endorse any particular technology, system, or type of composting equipment. Instead, it was designed so differences among composting technologies can be evaluated for specific needs.

The guide **does not** provide the information needed to design or build a composting facility. Building a composting operation can be a complicated task. Once this guide is used to narrow a decision to a level of technology and a specific method, other expertise is required.

After a brief discussion of the potential benefits of composting, the guide follows a simple approach (See Figure 1), used commonly by managers who must develop recommendations about major decisions. This process starts with gathering information about your specific situation, followed by using this information to complete a series of

analyses designed to help develop specific recommendations for a facility.

Figure 1- Decision Process



*Fact Sheet Issue Date: 1997*

### ***For More Information***

For a copy of the report, visit the CWC Internet Website at [www.cwc.org](http://www.cwc.org)

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