HOW DO I RECYCLE FOOD SCRAPS AT SCHOOL?

Food Scrap Recycling Guide for Castro Valley Schools
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GETTING STARTED

How do we get started?

It is important to plan ahead all the activities necessary to start a food scrap recycling program in your school. Follow the steps below to help you start a successful and sustainable program.

- **Contact your School District** – Let maintenance personnel know that you plan to start a food scrap recycling program at your school.

- **Form a team** – Establish a Food Scrap Recycling Team. The Team will be responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining your school’s food scrap recycling program. For more information on building your team, see pages 3 & 4.

- **Use this guide** – Work together as a team to complete the following pages, filling in spaces as you go.

- **Technical Assistance** – From assisting with program design to conducting staff trainings, Castro Valley Sanitary District (CVSan) and Waste Management of Alameda County, Inc. (WMAC) staff are available to provide technical assistance. Contact CVSan at 510-537-0757 and WMAC at 510-613-8751. Additionally, staff may visit your school regularly during the first year of implementation to help ensure your food scrap recycling program is a success.

- **Financial Assistance** – Funding assistance may be available from CVSan to help start a food scrap recycling program at your school. Download and print a Donation Request Form at [http://www.cvsan.org/downloads/3095.AppendixZ.pdf](http://www.cvsan.org/downloads/3095.AppendixZ.pdf). CVSan requires that all Donation Request Form(s) be signed by the Principal.

- **Kick-Off Assembly** – Once you are ready to start, CVSan staff may introduce your school to food scrap recycling with a 30 minute assembly training. The assembly is provided at no cost to your school.

Next, form a team and complete the Team Roster & Pledge
**TEAM ROSTER & PLEDGE**

The Food Scrap Recycling Team will be responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining your school’s food scrap recycling program. A good team is made up of at least 4 members of your school community and includes the following key players: Principal, Custodian, Kitchen staff, and 1 or more teachers. To help ensure the success and continuity of the program, please collect signatures from all team members for this pledge:

We pledge to continue working with the CVSan and WMAC to reduce lunchtime food waste at __________________________ School.

We understand that:
1. Food scraps make up at least 25% of a typical school’s waste.
2. Food scraps make up 35% of typical residential waste.
3. Food scraps may be recycled at home in Castro Valley.
4. A pound of lunchtime garbage converts to roughly 2 pounds of carbon dioxide.

Our school is committed to protecting the environment by implementing a sustainable food scrap recycling program that will continue for a minimum of 3 years.

Complete the table below with the names and contact information of each team member.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Name/Signature</th>
<th>Best Way to Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon Supervisor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Volunteer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Student food scrap monitors may also be a part of the team. See Worksheet #4 on page 12 for more information.*

**Additional Contacts:**

Castro Valley Sanitary District (CVSan)  
510-537-0757 (phone) | 510-537-1312 (fax)  
contact@cvsan.org

Waste Management of Alameda County, Inc. (WMAC)  
510-613-8751 (phone)

*Next, begin the Timeline & Tasks section*
Now you are ready to prepare for the rollout of your school’s food scrap recycling program. Listed below are the recommended activities and tasks that will need to be completed before the start of your school’s program. They are listed in chronological order beginning with the event that requires the longest lead time. Before you begin, set a date for the program to start. Then, work through the list, filling in dates and Team Member assignments as you go.

**Food Scrap Recycling Program Start Date:** ______________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Lead Time</th>
<th>Team Member(s)</th>
<th>Scheduled Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Schedule kick-off assembly. Contact CVSan at 510-537-0757 or</td>
<td>8 weeks out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:contact@cvsan.org">contact@cvsan.org</a> to schedule.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Determine your school’s current waste generation and potential</td>
<td>6 weeks out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waste reduction (see worksheet #1 on pages 6-7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Determine how your school will set-up the Recycling Stations</td>
<td>6 weeks out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(see worksheet #2 on pages 8-10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Determine collection details. Submit Donation Request Form for</td>
<td>6 weeks out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>items (see worksheet #3 on page 11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Determine Food Scrap Monitors (see worksheet #4 on page 12)</td>
<td>4 weeks out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Contact CVSan to schedule a presentation at a staff meeting</td>
<td>4 weeks out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Cart/dumpster delivery</td>
<td>2 weeks out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Food Scrap Monitor Training</td>
<td>1-2 weeks out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Pick-up donated items from CVSan (signs &amp; containers)</td>
<td>1-2 weeks out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Include article in School Newsletter</td>
<td>Anytime prior to start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Submit press release to newspaper</td>
<td>1 week prior to start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Lead Time</td>
<td>Team Member(s)</td>
<td>Scheduled Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Review Recycling Station set-up with Custodian</td>
<td>Week of start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Confirm Food Scrap Monitor schedule</td>
<td>Week of start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Remind faculty &amp; staff of the start of the program by placing a flyer in each box or sending an email</td>
<td>Week of start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Prepare collection containers with signs and liners</td>
<td>2 days before start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Make loud speaker announcement</td>
<td>Day of start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Set up recycling stations prior to assembly</td>
<td>Day of start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Check-in with noon supervisors</td>
<td>Day of and during week of start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Place organics carts curbside on weekly collection day(s)</td>
<td>From day of start on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Hold a Team Meeting to discuss program status</td>
<td>Week of start, then 4 weeks, 8 weeks after</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Hold a Team Meeting to discuss program continuation into the new school year</td>
<td>8 weeks prior to summer break</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WORKSHEET #1: SCHOOL WASTE GENERATION & REDUCTION

Before you design a food scrap recycling program for your school, you must first determine how much waste is generated during lunchtime and the potential waste reduction.

1. What is our school’s current monthly level of solid waste services?

Contact CVSan at 510-537-0757 for your school’s current service levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of waste</th>
<th>Amount in gallons/yards</th>
<th>Monthly Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Garbage</td>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycling</td>
<td></td>
<td>$0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organics</td>
<td></td>
<td>$0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. How much waste is generated during lunch on an average day at the following locations? Estimate the percentage of food and food-soiled paper (including milk cartons).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total estimated amount of garbage (gallons)</th>
<th>% estimated to be food scraps &amp; food-soiled paper</th>
<th>Estimated gallons of food scraps &amp; food-soiled paper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cafeteria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff breakroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other eating areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Potential daily waste reduction: 36.1 gallons

(Below is an example of how to complete the above table for your school)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total estimated amount of garbage (gallons)</th>
<th>% estimated to be food scraps &amp; food-soiled paper</th>
<th>Estimated gallons of food scraps &amp; food-soiled paper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cafeteria</td>
<td>30 gallons</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>22.5 gallons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>15 gallons</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>13.5 gallons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff breakroom</td>
<td>1 gallon</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0.1 gallons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other eating areas</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Potential daily waste reduction: 36.1 gallons
3. Based on the potential daily waste reduction determined on the previous page, let’s determine our school’s estimated potential waste reduction per week and per month. This will help your school determine what size Organics container(s) to order, as well as any changes to Garbage services your school may need.

a. Gallons of food scraps generated per day (from page 6):

\[ \text{Gallons/week} = \text{Gallons/day} \times 5 \text{ days} \]

\[ \text{Example: } 36.1 \text{ gallons/day} \times 5 \text{ days} = 180.5 \text{ gallons/week} \]

b. Next, convert from gallons to yards since most schools use containers that come in 1 yard increments. There are 200 gallons in a yard.

\[ \text{Yards/week} = \frac{\text{Gallons/week}}{200 \text{ gallons}} \]

\[ \text{Example: } 180.5 \text{ gallons/week} \div 200 \text{ gallons} = \approx 1 \text{ yard/week} \]

(round up to the closest whole number)

c. Now determine how much garbage your school can reduce each month by implementing a food scrap recycling program.

\[ \text{Cubic yards/month} = \text{Yards/week} \times 4 \text{ weeks} \]

\[ \text{Example: } 1 \text{ yard/week} \times 4 \text{ weeks} = 4 \text{ cubic yards} \]
WORKSHEET #2: RECYCLING STATIONS

Labeled containers will be placed in all lunchtime eating areas to collect food scraps for composting. Additionally, your school may choose to add recycling containers for bottles and cans, or Caprisun juice pouches for a buy-back program, and/or a container for liquids. Use the following guidelines to determine the set-up and location of lunchtime recycling stations.

Tips

• Make as few changes as possible to the current set-up. Position new recycling containers in the same locations as existing garbage cans.

• Remove one garbage can for each organics container added.

• Avoid multi-directional stations. Place containers in lines so that students may start at one end and finish at the other. (See page 10 for a typical recycling station)

• Remember any new program is trial and error. As the food scrap recycling program begins to take shape, you can adjust the container quantities and locations to best fit your needs.

Existing Set-Up

When designing recycling stations, it is important to evaluate the existing set-up of garbage/recycling containers. List lunchtime container locations and quantities in the lines below.

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Evaluation

Now that you’ve identified the existing set-up, it is important to evaluate its effectiveness. For example, does one garbage can consistently overfill, or is there one that is often under-used? This will help you decide where it is best to locate the recycling stations. List any observations to the existing set-up below.

____________________________________________________________________________

Recycling Station Locations

Recycling stations will be placed in the following locations:

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
Liquid Collection

Liquid collection is optional, however, benefits often outweigh any disadvantages. Please review the following “pros and cons” and then decide if liquid collection will be included at each Recycling Station.

Pros: reduced odor; less disposal weight for custodian; less likelihood of organics container liner breaking.

Cons: spill concerns; adds to students’ disposal time; adds to custodian’s clean-up time.

☐ Yes, liquid collection will be included. ☐ No, liquid collection will not be included.

Containers

The containers featured below are examples; they may or may not work for your school. You are encouraged to keep an open dialogue with the team to determine the best containers and set-up for your school.

You may notice the absence of a bottle and can recycling container. While bottle and can recycling is encouraged, it is recommended that it be kept separate from the lunchtime recycling stations. Some schools collect juice pouches or plastic bags and wrap for the Bag-A-Bag program. It is recommended that you make such additions to your recycling set-up once your food scrap recycling program is well established.

On the lines below, specify the total number of each container required for the recycling stations (# per station X # of stations).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liquid Bucket</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garbage Cans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organics Cart</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(32-gallon)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tray Collector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complete a Donation Request Form at www.cvsan.org for containers and signage you may need. CVSan requires that the Principal signs the form. To request Organics carts contact WMAC at 510-613-8751.

Some schools have elected to use existing garbage containers (see picture at left) for organics. CVSan encourages schools to use carts provided by WMAC as they are easily identifiable and they help reinforce the message of how composting at home is the same as how we compost at school.
Set-Up Order

Determine the order in which the containers will be placed at each station. Please note that each station should be identical and the signage should be visible.

Typical set-up order is: **START | Liquids | Garbage | Organics | Trays | END**

An example of a typical recycling station is shown below.

Some schools use the following chant, developed by Circus Center, to help remember the station order.

*Pour your liquids, that’s step one.*
*Toss your garbage, almost done.*
*Dump your tray without delay.*
*Stack your tray and out to play.*
WORKSHEET #3: CONTAINERS & COLLECTION

All Schools in the Castro Valley Unified School District and private schools located in the Castro Valley Sanitary District receive free organics and recycling services.

In the spaces below, please specify the number of containers and collections/week that will be needed to support your school’s food scrap recycling program.

Container type

- **Dumpsters/bins** may be used if space allows. Benefits include easier disposal (bags do not have to fit into a cart) and central disposal location (no concern of missing carts).

- **Organics carts** provide portable containment when space is limited. Benefits are that they are easier to move and they fit in spaces where dumpsters will not.

Organics Cart

- _____ 32-gallon; _____ collections/week
- _____ 64-gallon; _____ collections/week
- _____ 96-gallon; _____ collections/week

Dumpster/bin

- _____ 2-yard; _____ collections/week
- _____ 3-yard; _____ collections/week
- _____ 4-yard; _____ collections/week

Dumpster and Cart Location

Determine where the organic carts and dumpster will be located. Make sure that they are accessible to the custodian for convenience of emptying into them and WMAC for collection.

Container Request

Contact WMAC at 510-613-8751 for green organic carts. WMAC will make sure you have the correct container sizes and collection frequencies and recommend adjustments as needed. Schedule cart deliveries for arrival for approximately 2 weeks prior to the program start date.

Conversions

- 1 bag (from a “Brute” garbage can) = 30 gallons
- 30 gallons = 0.15 cubic yards
- 3-4 bags = 96 gallons (cart)
- 7-8 bags = 1 cubic yard of space
WORKSHEET #4: FOOD SCRAP MONITORS & BEST PRACTICES & TIPS

In the beginning, food scrap recycling may be a challenge for some students. Food Scrap Monitors provide assistance on how to correctly dispose of lunch waste during the first phase of your school’s food scrap recycling program. They will be needed for each lunch period and at each Station. As the program becomes common practice, the need for monitors diminishes. Monitors may also provide assistance after summer, winter, and spring breaks.

Food Scrap Monitor Trainings are offered by CVSan staff and should be conducted approximately 1-2 weeks prior to your school’s program start date.

Students make great food scrap recycling monitors. Decide which grades will take turns to be monitors. Monitors can also be teachers, volunteer parents, or students.

CVSan recommends two Food Scrap Monitors at each Recycling Station to provide assistance to students as they move through the Station.

**Monitors will not touch waste at any time.**

Monitors will take their places a minute or two prior to lunch waste disposal and remain at the Recycling Station until all students have gone through the line.

**Tips for quick disposal of lunchtime materials**

- Have students come from one table at a time and in a line to dispose of their lunch waste. This allows each student to dispose of waste correctly and prevents lunch monitors from being overwhelmed by trying to direct several students at a time

- Pull out straw from juice boxes before leaving the table or while waiting in line

- It’s best to finish milk and juice, but if there is a little bit of left over, carefully pour it into the bucket

- Empty food out of bags/containers and put garbage to one side of tray before getting to the station

- Dump all food and food soiled paper into organics cart all at once. Tossing items one-by-one can delay the line.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where are liquids emptied?
Typically, the custodian will empty the liquids bucket into the sanitary sewer system via a large sink/drain in a custodial service room.

Are bags used to line the green organics collection containers?
Yes. Use paper bags to contain food scraps. Clear plastic bags and compostable bags may be used, but must be left untied. They will be removed and discarded before the organic materials are composted.

Are signs used?
Yes. Fill out a Donation Request Form at CVSan’s website www.cvsan.org for collection containers and signage you will need for your food scrap recycling program. CVSan requires that all Donation Request Form(s) be signed by the Principal. For green organics carts contact WMAC at 510-613-8751. Laminated signs for each recycling station container will be provided.

What items are accepted in the green organics collection container?
All food scraps including fruits, vegetables, meats and dairy products; food-soiled paper including pizza boxes, milk cartons, paper towels, napkins plates and trays. For an expanded list of items that go in the green organics cart, please see the School Services & Green Resource Guide.

Do biodegradable plastics or compostable plastic products go into the green organics cart?
Compostable plastic products, or “bioplastics”, are not encouraged in Castro Valley’s organics collection program. They take too long to biodegrade and must be disposed of in the garbage. Products made from sugarcane, known as “bagasse” products, make great compostable alternatives.

What are the most common contaminants in the green organics container?
Clear plastic packaging, such as the wrapper found around the napkin/spork/straw packet, and plastic straws are the most common contaminants.

Is there an odor or vector problem caused by the food scrap recycling program?
No. There have been no reports of odor or vector problems. The use of bag liners combined with frequent collection by hauler greatly reduce odor and vector concerns.

May we combine food waste with our school’s yard waste?
Yes. All food scraps, food-soiled paper and yard waste may be combined in the green organics carts. These organic materials will be composted at a large-scale compost facility.

May we include kitchen waste in the food scrap recycling program?
Yes. Kitchen staff is encouraged to recycle all food scraps and food-soiled paper in the green organics collection containers. A collection container may be placed in the kitchen if space allows.
PRE-EVENT PRESS RELEASE- SAMPLE

For Immediate Release

DATE

SCHOOL NAME
To Start Food Scrap Recycling Program

SCHOOL NAME has teamed up with Castro Valley Sanitary District (CVSan) and Waste Management of Alameda County, Inc. (WMAC) to develop a food scrap recycling program. The program will begin on DATE, with a kick-off assembly training by CVSan. Staff will stay to assist students with the recycling process during their lunch hour.

Students are anxious to participate in the program and are excited that their school will be becoming more environmentally friendly. One fifth-grader noted, “I think it’s important for us to not waste stuff, even food.”

CVSan residents have been participating in curbside food scrap recycling since 2001. Extending the program to include Castro Valley’s schools is a logical next step; one that will save SCHOOL NAME an estimated $X,000.00 annually.

Faxed to: CV Forum
Daily Review
SCHOOL NEWSLETTER ARTICLE- SAMPLE

In an effort to reduce the amount of garbage we generate at SCHOOL NAME, we have developed a food scrap recycling program with the assistance of Castro Valley Sanitary District (CVSan) and Waste Management of Alameda County, Inc. (WMAC). On DATE, several students were trained to become “Food Scrap Monitors” and on DATE, we’ll all learn the do’s and don’ts of food scrap recycling during a kick-off assembly presented by CVSan.

While this program will be new to SCHOOL NAME, CVSan residents have been recycling their food scraps and food-soiled paper since 2001. Residents can place everything from pizza boxes and paper napkins to chicken bones and food-soiled paper directly into their green organics cart. The mixed contents of yard waste, food scraps and food-soiled paper are then hauled to a composting facility where it is turned into compost instead of being dumped into a landfill. Since many students recycle their food scraps at home, it makes sense to offer the program at school.

Parents, teachers and staff are encouraged to attend the assembly in the cafeteria on DATE from TIME. We look forward to a successful program and are hopeful it will result in renewed enthusiasm for recycling and waste reduction at our school. For more information, please contact NAME AND PHONE NUMBER.