



New Recycling and Food Waste Collection Requirements for Schools

In November 2019, the Dakota County Board of Commissioners adopted a revised [Ordinance 110: Solid Waste Management](#), (www.dakotacounty.us, search *Ordinance 110*) to implement strategies in the 2018-2030 Solid Waste Master Plan to reduce waste going to landfills, improve the quality of materials recycled, and make progress toward the state's goal to recycle 75 percent of waste by 2030. Changes to the ordinance include new recycling requirements for schools and new organics collection requirements for large generators of food waste.

Below is a summary of the new requirements that impact schools (Pre-K-12, higher education).

1. Recycling Requirements for Schools

Owners and managers of schools must recycle a [designated list of recyclables](#) at all school buildings and grounds and follow best waste management practices, including:

- a. All recycling and trash containers are properly-labeled. Labels must be consistent with County waste abatement messaging guidelines and:
 - Indicate the material type collected, and use the term “Trash”, “Recycle” or “Recycling” and “Organics” (if collected). Other waste types must be labeled with the materials accepted.
 - Show images of materials accepted in recycling and organics (if collected) containers.
 - Be color-coded (blue for recycling, green for organics, gray or black for trash).
 - Be visible and legible to users.
 - Include preparation requirements, where applicable.
- b. Co-locate recycling containers within 10 feet of trash containers.
- c. The collection schedule and container capacity are sufficient to collect all the recyclables from the building spaces and to prevent overflowing containers.
- d. Ensure recyclables and organics (if collected) are separated and delivered to a recycling or organics facility.
- e. Provide standardized waste abatement messages to employees, students, housekeeping, and custodial contractors within 30 days of hire, and annually thereafter¹.
- f. Annually report to the County to demonstrate program effectiveness on County forms².
- g. Do not put any of the items on the [designated list of contaminants](#) in the recycling container.

When do schools need to comply?

Phase 1 – by July 1, 2020: Commercial organizations, including schools, that are already required to recycle per the state’s commercial recycling law ([Minnesota Statute § 115A.151](#)). This state law

¹ The County is developing a repository of waste abatement messages that includes recycling educational information and images that can be downloaded for use at no charge. Messages will be available in Q1 of 2020.

² County staff is currently working with stakeholders on all components of implementation, including development of County forms for annual reporting. Schools will not have to report until forms are provided by County staff.

currently requires all public schools and most private schools in Dakota County to recycle at least three materials (paper, metal, glass, plastic).

Phase 2 – by January 1, 2021: All other schools and organizations (e.g., small private schools).

See Ordinance 110, Sections: 3.01 Generator Requirements; 16.02 Commercial Generators; 16.05 Trash, Recycling and Organics Requirements; and 16.06 Labeling (pages 12, 111-113) for a full list of requirements.

2. Requirements for Some Schools to Collect Food Waste

Schools, colleges, and universities with dining services that generate at least one ton (eight cubic yards) of trash per week and generate back-of-house³ organics (food waste) must separately collect a [designated list of organics](#) from back-of-house areas for appropriate management (donation, food-for-animals, commercial composting) and implement best waste management practices for collection, including:

- a. All organics containers are properly labeled. Labels must be consistent with County waste abatement messaging guidelines and:
 - Indicate the material type collected - use the term “Organics”. Other waste types must be labeled with the materials accepted.
 - Show images of materials accepted (food waste types) in organics containers.
 - Be color-coded (green for organics).
 - Be visible and legible to users.
 - Include preparation requirement, where applicable.
- b. The collection schedule and container capacity are sufficient to collect all the back-of-house organics to prevent overflowing containers.
- c. Ensure back-of-house food waste is separated and delivered for food recovery or to an organics facility.
- d. Provide standardized waste abatement messages in print or electronic form to each employee and housekeeping and custodial contractor within 30 days of hire and annually thereafter⁴.
- e. Annually report to the County to demonstrate⁵ program effectiveness on County forms⁵.

When do schools need to comply? By January 1, 2023

See Ordinance 110, Sections: 3.01 Generator Requirements; 16.04 Organics; 16.05 Trash, Recycling and Organics Requirements; and 16.06 Labeling (pages 12, 112-113) for a full list of requirements.

³ Back-of-house means pre-consumption food waste from the kitchen, food preparation, dishwashing, and storage areas. It does not include food waste generated from food that has been served to students, staff, or the public.

⁴ The County is developing a repository of waste abatement messages that includes recycling educational information and images that can be downloaded for use at no cost. Messages will be available in Q1 2020.

⁵ Schools will not have to report until forms are provided by County staff.

Resources to Help

Dakota County is developing resources to help schools start or improve an existing recycling program and become compliant with new requirements. Resources that are currently available include:

- a. Free bin labels and educational resources.
- b. Funding for recycling and food waste collection improvements (limited, no match required).
- c. On-site consulting assistance (non-regulatory).
- d. School e-news. Sign up at www.dakotacounty.us, search *e-news*.

To learn more or to order free labels and educational resources, visit www.dakotacounty.us, search *school recycling* or contact:

- Ali Vandercook, School Recycling Program Coordinator
- ali.vandercook@co.dakota.mn.us
- 952-891-7552

Become Engaged

The new requirements may have just passed in November 2019, but County staff are actively engaging stakeholders on implementation approaches. If you would like more information about the new requirements or wish to provide feedback on implementation, contact:

- Dave Magnuson, Waste Regulation Unit Supervisor
- dave.magnuson@co.dakota.mn.us
- 952-891-7551
- www.dakotacounty.us, search *Ordinance 110*