

Zero Landfill Waste

There is no away when we throw away

HIGHLIGHTS

An average American generates about 4.4 pounds of landfill waste every day. Emory encourages all members of its community to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills – and Emory University is leading a multitude of efforts designed to support that goal.

The [Emory Waste Policy](#) was rolled out in January 2018 to guide campus waste management changes. Designed to achieve our 2025 goals for waste reduction and diversion, this extensive program offers convenient recycling and composting stations across campus and clear instructions to enable the entire campus community to eliminate landfill waste.

Emory's [Sustainability Vision & Strategic Plan, 2025](#) includes the goal to divert 95% of non-construction campus waste from municipal landfills by that year.

According to Emory Recycles, from September 2018 to August 2019, the campus collectively diverted about 72.36% of its total waste from landfills – an over 13% increase from the 59% diverted in 2017, before the new waste policy was adopted.

BENEFITS

By recycling and composting at Emory, we reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfills, enhance environmental justice by reducing the negative effects of landfills on already marginalized populations, and decrease habitat loss and animal displacement due to landfills. Recycling conserves natural resources, increases economic security, prevents pollution, and helps create jobs in the community.

Emory University deeply values sustainability, and we are embracing the opportunity for our entire community to develop habits that will encourage lifelong sustainable living. The Waste Policy requires all University departments to include information regarding Emory's landfill diversion commitments in new employee, faculty and student orientation materials by 2020.

Waste is broken into specific streams to optimize revenue that can be realized from recyclables.

When there is excess food prepared in the Emory Dining locations, the student group, [Emory Food Chain](#), recovers much of the excess food and repurposes it into meals for

HOW IT WORKS

All major University buildings are equipped with [five standardized bins](#) to collect the following commodities:

- Compost
- Plastics and Metals
- Mixed Paper
- White Paper
- Landfill

Exterior bins have been standardized to provide two collection streams: compost and mixed recycling. There are designated [collection areas in most major buildings for hard-to-recycle materials](#) – glass, packaging Styrofoam, batteries, light bulbs, ink and toner cartridges, and aerosol cans.

The servicing of desk-side waste or recycling bins by Campus Services' staff has been discontinued. While Emory staff and faculty may keep a bin or other container at their desk, they will individually transport their disposables to central collection areas.

All University events will be [zero landfill waste events](#) by 2020 and free from disposable plastic

area food pantries and shelters. This food can then feed our neighbors and be diverted from landfills.

water bottles by 2025, unless granted an exception by the Executive Vice President for Business and Administration.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT WASTE REDUCTION, RECYCLING, COMPOSTING AND LANDFILL WASTE AT EMORY UNIVERSITY

[Waste Policy Basics](#)

[Waste Reduction and Diversion During the Pandemic](#)

[Five-Bin Waste Streams and Sorting](#)

[How to Recycle Common Confusing Items](#)

[Hard-to-Recycle Materials](#)

[Waste FAQ Bibliography](#)

LEARN MORE

Emory Campus Services announcement: The university's compost streams — including food waste from kitchens and green bins around campus, as well as animal bedding — are being temporarily sent to landfills.

This short-term diversion was necessitated when the vendors that haul and process Emory's compost either went out of business or cut back operations, victims of the financial crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learn more [here](#).

Want to help us reduce waste and keep it out of area landfills? Volunteer as a [Zero Waste Ambassador](#)! This group serves as peer-to-peer educators in residence halls, offices and labs and during events to educate about proper waste management.

Check out our [Follow the Waste](#) campaign to learn more about the environmental justice concerns relating to waste.

QUESTIONS?

Wondering about reducing and diverting waste in the pandemic? Check out our helpful [flyer](#).

Looking for where to recycle your hard to recycle materials? [Visit the Hard to Recycle Stations Map!](#)

Don't see an answer to your question on the FAQs? Email emorysustainability@emory.edu

See more details at the bottom of the page regarding our pandemic waste policies