

# Operating a Class 2 Composting and/or Collection Operation in Georgia

The purpose of this document is to help clarify Georgia's solid waste rules pertaining to operating a class 2 composting operation and/or a collection operation for source-separated organics (food scraps). Please note that the language in this document is paraphrased from the rule for clarity. Download the complete rule from EPD's website at <https://epd.georgia.gov/rules-laws-enforcement/existing-rules-and-corresponding-laws>.

Class 2 composting operations and collections operations both require a **permit-by-rule** (PBR) under the Georgia Rules for Solid Waste Management, Chapter 391-3-4. PBR applications are available online and should be submitted electronically through the Georgia EPD Online System (GEOS). See Appendix A for the information required in a PBR.

After approval, you will be issued a PBR number. If applying for both a compost operation and a collection operation, you will receive two PBR numbers. The compost number will end in CO [e.g., 001-0123 PBR(CO)] and the collection number will end in COL [e.g., 002-0234 PBR(COL)].

## I. Class 2 Compost Operations

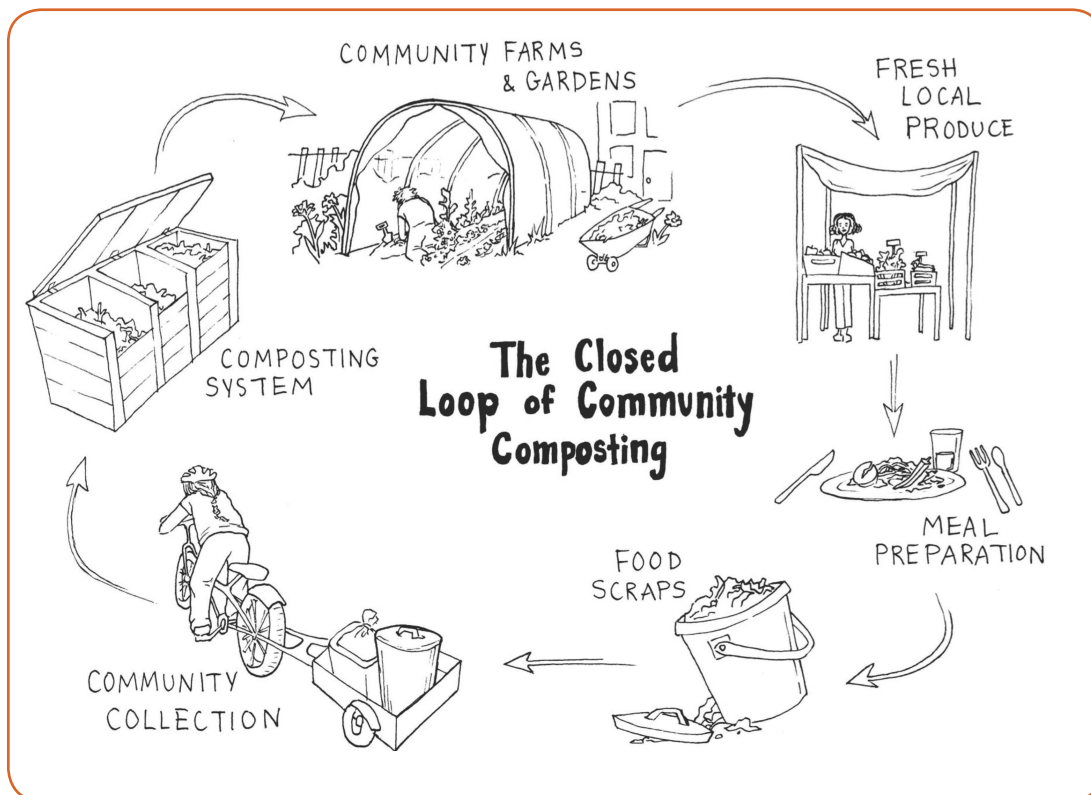
Some composting operations are not required to have either a full solid waste handling permit or a PBR. The most common examples are: backyard composting, operations that accept only category A feedstock, and K-12 institutions that compost their own material for educational purposes. For the full list of exemptions, see Rule 391-3-4-.16(3).

### Ready to Apply?

To apply for a permit-by-rule for a class 2 composting or collection operation, visit <https://geos.epd.georgia.gov/GA/GEOS/Public>.

### Permit-by-Rule

A less stringent permitting mechanism intended for operations deemed to present a lower risk to human health and the environment.



### Illustrations

Source: L. Bilsens Brolis, B. Platt, Community Composting Done Right: A Guide to Best Management Practices, Institute for Local Self-Reliance, 2019 ([www.ilsr.org/composting-bmp-guide](http://www.ilsr.org/composting-bmp-guide)). Reprinted with permission.

### Category A Feedstock

Yard trimmings, land-clearing debris, agricultural residuals generated and processed on site, untreated and unpainted wood, or any combination of the above.

### Category B Feedstock

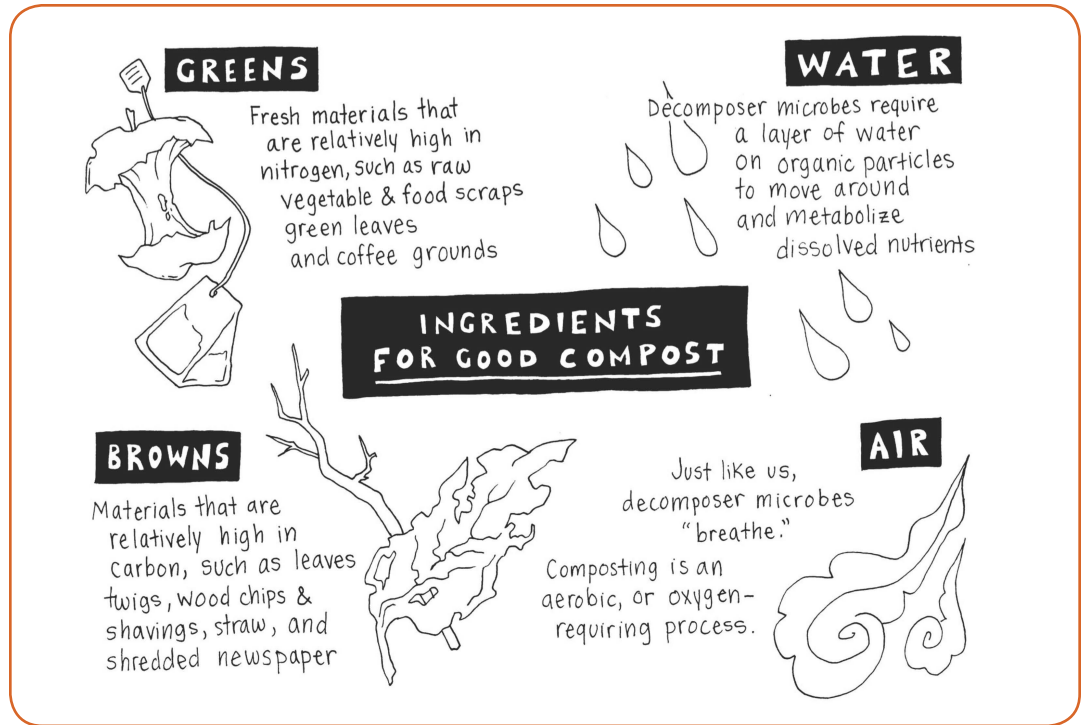
Herbivorous animal manure generated at a zoo, agricultural residuals generated off site, and/or source-separated organics.

### Properly Trained

There are many options for compost operator training. EPD will review training for facility operations managers on a case-by-case basis.

### Vector

An organism, such as an insect or rodent, that can transmit a pathogen.



To be eligible to operate under a PBR, facilities/operations must:

- Only compost **category A and B feedstocks**
- Receive less than 500 tons of category B feedstocks per calendar month
- Exclude the receipt of non-vegetative food processing residuals and manures

### Design

PBR compost operations must meet the following design standards:

- The area used for composting should be constructed to maintain its structural integrity under operating conditions and be capable of supporting vehicles
- The operation should be large enough in size/capacity to manage the projected volume of compost and waste generated
- The areas for storing feedstocks prior to processing should be clearly defined and the maximum capacity specified
- For windrow operations, the maximum composting process windrow size and minimum composting process windrow spacing should match the capability and requirements of the equipment used

### Operations

The operation and management of the compost facility must be under the supervision and control of an individual **properly trained** in the operation of such facilities at all times. Facility operations managers must be able to document training in the basics of composting facility operations.

The compost operation must post a sign at its entrance listing the facility name, hours of operation, feedstocks accepted, and emergency contact information. By the end of each operating day, the facility must process all incoming category B feedstock into the active composting area, transfer it to leak-proof containers, or mix it with bulking material and cover in a manner that minimizes nuisance odors and scavenging by **vectors**.

### Water, Fire, and Nuisance Controls

The compost facility must have storm water control measures and must prevent the flow of contact water from the active composting area into surface water and curing or finished compost areas.

Suitable measures must be applied to control odors and vectors and to prevent, control, and extinguish fires.

### Storage

Compost operations must not store material in excess of the designated capacity of the facility. Storage of finished compost on site is limited to 12 months, unless otherwise approved by EPD.

Non-compostable material and any solid waste generated at the facility must be stored in a waste container and then either recycled or disposed of at a permitted solid waste facility.

### Recordkeeping

Facilities that accept category B feedstock from off-site must track the weight or volume (in tons or cubic yards) of the feedstocks accepted, total compost produced, and any amount sold or used. These records must be kept at the composting facility (unless EPD approves an off-site location) for a minimum of three years in a form suitable for submission to or inspection by EPD.

### Facility Closure

A notice of final closure – that includes documentation that all feedstocks and active, curing, and final compost materials have been removed from the facility and that the site has been stabilized in accordance with the Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia – must be provided to EPD within 60 days from the final receipt of feedstock.

A site that goes more than 180 days without receiving any feedstock, unless properly closed or otherwise approved by EPD, shall be considered closed and in violation of the rules.

### Siting

The following rules pertain to locating/siting a compost operation:

- Don't locate the facility in the 100-year floodplain
- Do maintain a 50-foot undisturbed buffer between the composting operation and the property line
- Do maintain a 200-foot buffer between the composting operation and any adjacent residences and/or drinking water supply wells
- Do maintain a 50-foot buffer between the composting operation and all streams
- Do provide EPD with a description of surrounding land uses up to a ½-mile radius of the operation
- Do meet **airport safety restrictions** required by rule 391-3-4-.05(1)(c)



### Airport Safety Restrictions

New facilities may not be located within:

- 10,000 feet of any public or private runway used by turbojet aircraft
- 5,000 feet of any public or private runway used by piston-type aircraft

Existing facilities within these distances must show that they are designed and operated so as not to pose a bird hazard to aircraft.

New facilities proposed within a 5-mile radius of the end of any runway must notify the airport and the Federal Aviation Administration.

### Collector

A person who, under verbal or written agreements and with or without compensation, collects and/or transports solid wastes from industries, offices, retail outlets, businesses, institutions, and/or similar locations, or from residential dwellings (but does not include an individual collecting and/or transporting waste from his or her own single family dwelling unit).

### Covered

The vehicle is covered with a tarp or similar device/mechanism when there is material in the vehicle and after waste has been removed. After the material has been removed and the vehicle cleaned, it does not have to be covered.

### Substantially Leakproof

Only intermittent drops of liquid can escape from the vehicle. If the amount of liquid escaping is a steady stream, then the vehicle is not considered substantially leakproof. If the rate of liquid release would, in the opinion of an enforcement officer, equal a significant release over the duration of the collection route, the vehicle is not substantially leakproof.

## II. Collection Operations

If, either as part of your class 2 composting operation or as a stand-alone business, you are collecting category A and/or B feedstock and transporting it to a composting facility, you are required to have a collection PBR. An operation is considered collection if the **collector** is aggregating or combining materials from multiple individuals or picking up from multiple locations per day. This includes house-to-house pick-up, as well as roll-off/dumpster operations.

### Vehicles and Containers

Vehicles or containers used for collecting and transporting must be **covered**, **substantially leakproof**, durable, and easy to clean. Vehicles must be inspected at least daily, cleaned frequently, and maintained. Cleaning should include removing all materials stuck to the inside and outside of the vehicle and containers. If complaints are received, the collector must implement regular cleaning procedures.

Vehicles should not go unwashed overnight if they have transported particularly malodorous material. If vehicles are not cleaned overnight, or particularly malodorous vehicles are left unwashed overnight, they must be covered with an impermeable tarp or parked inside an enclosed structure, or the vehicle must have a fully enclosed trailer so it does not attract vectors and create odors.

All wastewater from cleaning vehicles must be handled in a manner that meets all applicable environmental laws and regulations. This means that collection vehicles should be cleaned in an enclosed and/or curbed structure with an impervious floor, or another location where the washwater can be collected. Washwater must not be allowed to run off or be discharged without treatment. It can be discharged to a permitted wastewater treatment system, or it can be collected in a holding tank and then transported to a permitted wastewater treatment facility.

### Littering

Vehicles or containers used for collecting and transporting must be loaded and moved in a manner that the contents will not fall, leak, or spill and must be covered when necessary to prevent blowing of material from the vehicle.

### Materials Collected

All materials collected must be taken to a facility permitted to receive those specific types of materials (i.e., feedstock categories). No regulated quantities of hazardous wastes may be collected or transported, except in accordance with the provisions of the Georgia Hazardous Waste Management Act, O.C.G.A. 12-8-60.

### Siting

It is the responsibility of collectors to comply with all local rules, regulations, and ordinances pertaining to the operation of solid waste collection systems. For example, the siting of collection operations is subject to local zoning and land use regulations, and as such, they may be located in or near residential areas or public facilities. Therefore, collectors should continuously monitor their operation to minimize the impact it may have on surrounding communities.

*For more information on collection operations, please see EPD's "Transfer Station and Collection Operation Guidance" at <https://epd.georgia.gov/document/document/transfer-station-and-collection-operation-guidance/download>. The Rules for Solid Waste Management, Chapter 391-3-4, can be found on EPD's website at <https://epd.georgia.gov/rules-laws-enforcement/existing-rules-and-corresponding-laws>. Carefully review the definitions and requirements pertaining to class 2 composting operations. A violation of any of the applicable requirements will invalidate your permit-by-rule status. Also, note that your PBR does not supersede any approvals or permits that may be required by any other federal, state, or local ordinances, rules, or regulations.*

# Appendix A: Permit-by-Rule Online Application

## I. FACILITY INFORMATION

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★ System Facility Name: ?

Facility/Property Address 1:

Facility/Property Address 2:

County:

City:

State:

Zip:

Latitude:

Longitude:

Display Lat/Long on Map

Program Facility Name:

Program Facility ID:

Mailing Address 1:

Mailing Address 2:

County:

City:

State:

Zip:

## II. APPLICANT INFORMATION

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Check here if Applicant is the same as RO

★ Owner First Name

Middle Name

★ Last Name

★ Owner Phone (555-555-5555)

★ Email

★ Owner Mailing Address 1

Mailing Address 2

★ City

★ State

★ Zip Code

★ Responsible Official First Name

Middle Name

★ Last Name

★ Title

★ Responsible Official Phone (555-555-5555)

★ Email

★ Mailing Address 1

Mailing Address 2

★ City

★ State

★ Zip Code

### III. APPLICATION TYPE:

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★ Check all applicable Application Types:

- New
- Transfer of Ownership
- Updated Contact Information

### IV. OPERATION TYPE:

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★ Only check boxes for the operation(s) for which you will be responsible.

- Collection
- Transfer Station
- On-site Processing or Thermal Treatment
- Class 2 Composting Facility
- Yard Trimmings Landfill
- Other

★ Facility is:  Private Use Only  Public (Open to the general public)

### V. SOLID WASTE HANDLED:

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★ Check all applicable types.

- Municipal
- Construction & Demolition
- Industrial
- Compost Category A and B Feedstocks
- Inert
- Biomedical
- Yard Trimmings

### VI. DESCRIPTION OF OPERATION

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Briefly describe the general nature of the proposed operation

### VII. AREA SERVED:

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★ Please select the area(s) to be served:  In State  Out of State