

# Trash Talk

The following words are good to use in starting a conversation or discussion about solid waste. Sometimes when we talk to groups of children or adults, we use words that are familiar in our industry but may be a mystery to others. Listed below are some commonly used words along with simple definitions and some pronunciations (to make it easy for children to understand).



## **Biodegradable** - (Bi-o-dee-GRAY-duh-bull)

Biodegradable means that an object will break down or rot and return to the earth as a natural part of it.

## **Compost** - (KOM-post)

To compost is a natural way to recycle food wastes and vegetation like tree trimmings and grass clippings. Composting turns these waste products into new soil that will help plants grow.

## **Contamination**

Recycling contamination is when non-recyclable material ends up in the recycling system or when materials are not properly cleaned, such as when juice remains in a plastic bottle, peanut butter or mayonnaise in a plastic jar, or grease on a pizza box.

## **Environment** - (en-VI-ron-ment)

The natural surroundings in which we live.

## **Garbage, trash and solid waste**

Garbage and trash are common household wastes that are sometimes called solid waste. Most anything that you put into a garbage receptacle from inside your home is considered to be garbage or trash. Included are non-recyclable product packaging, used paper towels/napkins and any other items that are not recycled.

## **Household Hazardous Waste**

Household hazardous waste is special kinds of waste that can negatively impact our environment if these items are not handled carefully. Household hazardous waste should never be placed in the regular (everyday) garbage/trash. Find out where you should bring this type of waste from your municipality or county. Some examples of household hazardous waste are: used motor oil, pesticides, pool chemicals, oil-based paint, old car batteries, compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) and cleaning products.

## **Incinerate** - (in-SIN-er-ate)

To incinerate is to burn trash at a very high temperature in the waste industry; incineration is done to reduce the volume of garbage or trash that has to be put into a landfill. In some cities and counties, the garbage or trash is burned to make electricity, which is often called beneficial use.

## **Landfill**

A landfill is an area that has been specially prepared for disposal of garbage or trash. Landfills are usually lined with plastic to keep pollutants from seeping into the ground water.

## **Leachate** - (LEECH-ate)

Leachate is a liquid that is produced when rainwater sinks into the landfill and mixes with the garbage or trash and/or when garbage breaks down.

## **Litter**

Litter is misplaced garbage or trash that is unsightly and can cause harm to people, animals and the environment. Littering is against the law and you can be fined for littering.

## **Litterbug**

Litterbugs are people who carelessly throw things out of cars or on the ground and then those misplaced items become litter.

## **Markets and Marketable**

**Markets** are the facilities that your recyclables are sent to once they are picked up from your location. Markets can include intermediate processing facilities where recyclables are sorted as well as end markets that turn the recyclables into new products. **Marketable** means producing recyclables that can be turned into new products. Keeping contamination out of the recycling stream ensures that your recyclables will be marketable.

## **Non-point source pollution (also known as pointless pollution)**

This type of pollution can come from a variety of places and is caused by many sources, including the runoff of litter, pet waste, fertilizers, pesticides, faulty sewage and stormwater systems. This type of pollution is harmful to public health and the environment.

## **Pollution**

The contamination of the environment with man-made waste.

## **Recycling Collection Methods**

Dual stream recycling and single stream recycling are both recyclable materials collection systems, but with one important difference. In **dual stream** programs, aluminum, and steel/tin cans, plastic and glass bottles/containers are collected in one recycling bin, while paper (cardboard, mixed paper, newspaper) are collected in another recycling bin. In **single stream** programs, aluminum, and steel/tin cans, plastic and glass bottles/containers as well as paper (cardboard, mixed paper, newspaper) are all collected together in one recycling bin.

## **Source separation**

This is the process of separating recyclable materials from garbage and placing the recyclables into the proper containers. Depending on your collection system, recyclables may be required to be further separated into various categories (such as bottles and cans versus paper).

**Note:** NJ passed the mandatory **Source Separation and Recycling Act** in April 1987. Everyone (residents, businesses and institutions) in NJ must keep mandated recyclables separate from trash at the point where they are generated. Those mandated recyclables must be recycled in order to be in compliance with this law!

## **Storm drains**

Specially designed drains for rain water and melting snow, found on most streets. Storm drains are connected to and empty out into a waterway. Litter from streets collects at storm drains and then is delivered into the nearest waterway.

## **Walkthrough Assessment**

A walkthrough assessment is an examination of your waste generation and handling methods. It involves noting what materials are generated, the approximate quantity of those materials and the system that is currently used to manage those materials. The assessment should also provide detailed information about properly labeled recycling and trash collection containers (indoors) and the proper placement of those containers (next to each other); as well as appropriate outdoor containers/dumpsters that are designated for trash and separate containers/dumpsters for recycling. It is not as complex a task as a waste audit and will provide the information needed to improve the current recycling program and achieve compliance with source separation.

## **Waste audit**

A waste audit is a comprehensive analysis of the garbage or recycling that is being generated by a location. It involves sorting a sample of items generated into various categories. It is helpful in determining the quantities of recyclables and garbage and assessing whether the current recycling and garbage systems are being utilized properly.