



Massachusetts
Department
of
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION

fact sheet

Frequently Asked Questions for the Supermarket Recycling Program Certification

Why should my supermarket certify?

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) has worked in partnership with the Massachusetts Food Association (MFA) and individual supermarkets to develop a voluntary program that has proven to save money, provides positive recognition, and offers regulatory relief.

What are the steps I need to take to certify?

Complete the certification form found at www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/supermkt.htm. Print, sign, and mail the form to the contact listed. Please note that MassDEP will need an original signature on file for this form. You may email or fax a copy of the form and send the original by mail.

Why do I need such a high level person to sign the certification?

Because this program offers regulatory relief from current MassDEP regulations, it is imperative that the official who signs the certification is authorized to do so.

Is there a cost to certify?

No. Certification for this program is free.

How will I know my certification has been accepted?

MassDEP will send a confirmation letter to the store contact and the corporate/owner contact (if a different person), identifying the certified location and time period.

Why do I have to certify biennially?

Through biennial certification, supermarkets will reaffirm that their program is meeting the program criteria. In consultation with MFA and individual supermarkets, MassDEP may also change the criteria and/or benefits of certification in future years.

I do not operate a supermarket, but have lots of “compostable” material in my waste stream. Can I participate in this program?

This program is intended for supermarkets only. Supermarkets are defined as grocery stores or supermarkets selling at retail a full line of dry grocery, canned goods, perishable and non-perishable items and with service deli, bakery and seafood sections, with annual sales of \$2 million or more. If your business generates significant amounts of cardboard, food waste, and plastic as a percentage of your total waste and your operations are of a similar nature (i.e. full service retail food sales), you may contact MassDEP to find out if you are eligible for certification.

What are the “waste bans”?

Massachusetts solid waste regulations ban certain materials from disposal or transfer for disposal. These materials include paper; glass, metal and plastic containers; leaves and yard waste; batteries; appliances; tires; cathode ray tubes; and construction and demolition debris (asphalt pavement; brick; concrete; wood; and metal).

Waste bans apply to solid waste generators, haulers, and transfer and disposal facilities. The waste bans are intended to conserve capacity at existing disposal facilities; minimize the need for new facility construction; signal to recyclables markets that large volumes of material will be available on a consistent basis. The bans also restrict disposal of certain toxic substances or materials that may adversely affect the environment when landfilled or incinerated.

For more information on the waste bans, see the MassDEP Waste Disposal Ban web page at www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/solid/regs0201.htm.

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ADA Coordinator at
(617) 574-6872.



Why do I have to certify each individual store?

The SRPC exemption applies only to individual waste loads from a certified supermarket location. Once a store applies for and receives certification, all solid waste transfer and disposal facilities will be notified by MassDEP of its status and waste loads coming *from that particular store* will be exempt from routine comprehensive inspections for the presence of paper (including cardboard), glass, metal and plastic containers, leaves and yard waste that are required by MassDEP.

Can I list all my stores on one certification form if the certification information is the same?

If you are interested in submitting certifications for multiple locations at one time, please contact Morgan Harriman at 617-654-6580 or morgan.harriman@state.ma.us

Why is hauler contact information needed for each of the recyclable materials listed in the criteria (cardboard, organics and shrink and plastic wrap) and for trash?

Supermarkets need to maintain records to verify that the program requirements are being met. If a supermarket with SRPC delivers unacceptable amounts of waste ban materials for transfer or disposal, MassDEP would need to investigate whether the supermarket is still meeting the SRPC criteria. The information contained in the certification provides MassDEP with the information necessary to verify a supermarket's recycling and organics diversion programs.

What if I don't know where the materials are going? How do I get that information?

Your hauler(s) should be able to provide you with a list of where materials are sent.

What does this mean: "If 80 percent of the stores in a particular supermarket company achieve and maintain SRPC, the company would receive a company-wide exemption"? How do I receive this exemption?

MassDEP recognizes that there are certain facility constraints that may prevent companies from achieving certification in all stores. Therefore, MassDEP will grant a company-wide exemption to companies who certify a minimum of 80 percent of their stores. Supermarket companies will need to provide a letter attesting that it has certified 80 percent or greater of their stores and provide a complete list of all stores to be included in the exemption. MassDEP will verify this information against its records and send out a letter confirming the company-wide exemption and notify solid waste facilities.

Why is there a "waiver" for waxed cardboard? Where do I find this waiver?

MassDEP recognizes that certain space limitations and market constraints prevent diversion of waxed cardboard. If a supermarket is unable to recycle waxed cardboard, it may apply for a waiver documenting store or composting facility constraints. All requests for waivers will be verified by MassDEP through a review process that may include visiting the store location or confirming that maximum efforts were made to contact all known local markets to have materials recycled. See the waiver form at: www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/supermkt.htm

How do I get assistance in setting up a program?

MassDEP has developed the Supermarket Composting Handbook, a step-by-step manual for supermarket operators available at www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/supermkt.htm and or for purchase from the Massachusetts Food Association (MFA) at www.mafood.com. To locate an industry consultant, contact the MFA. To request MassDEP technical assistance, complete a technical assistance request form at: www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/supermkt.htm

How do I find a hauler to take my materials?

For recyclables and compostables, visit Earth 911 at www.earth911.org select "business resources", then select a material on the drop down list. In addition, MassDEP has on its website a *List of Compost Haulers in Massachusetts*, which can be found at: www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/supermkt.htm

Where can I find information about composting facilities in Massachusetts that take food waste?

See the *Organics Waste Recycling Facilities for Supermarkets* at:
www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/supermkt.htm

Where do I find information on food donation programs?

See the *Food Donation Fact Sheet* at: www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/supermkt.htm

How do I find information about who is participating?

MassDEP publishes a list of supermarkets with SRPC on its Supermarket Recycling web page. For further information, contact Morgan Harriman at 617-654-6580 or morgan.harriman@state.ma.us

Why would my certification get rescinded? How could that happen and what would it mean?

MassDEP would rescind your certification would be rescinded if your supermarket was not meeting the criteria for participation. Although exempt from comprehensive waste inspections, waste loads from supermarkets are still subject to routine ongoing waste stream monitoring for clearly visible banned materials. Should MassDEP identify a waste load originating from a certified supermarket that contains banned materials, the agency would contact the certified supermarket to verify whether it is meeting the criteria for participation. If not, MassDEP would rescind the certification and the supermarket would no longer be exempt from comprehensive waste inspections. The supermarket could seek reinstatement of its certification by documenting conformance with SRPC program criteria.

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