

Composting @ Pitt

A Guide for Building Occupants

Pitt
Sustainability



GOALS:

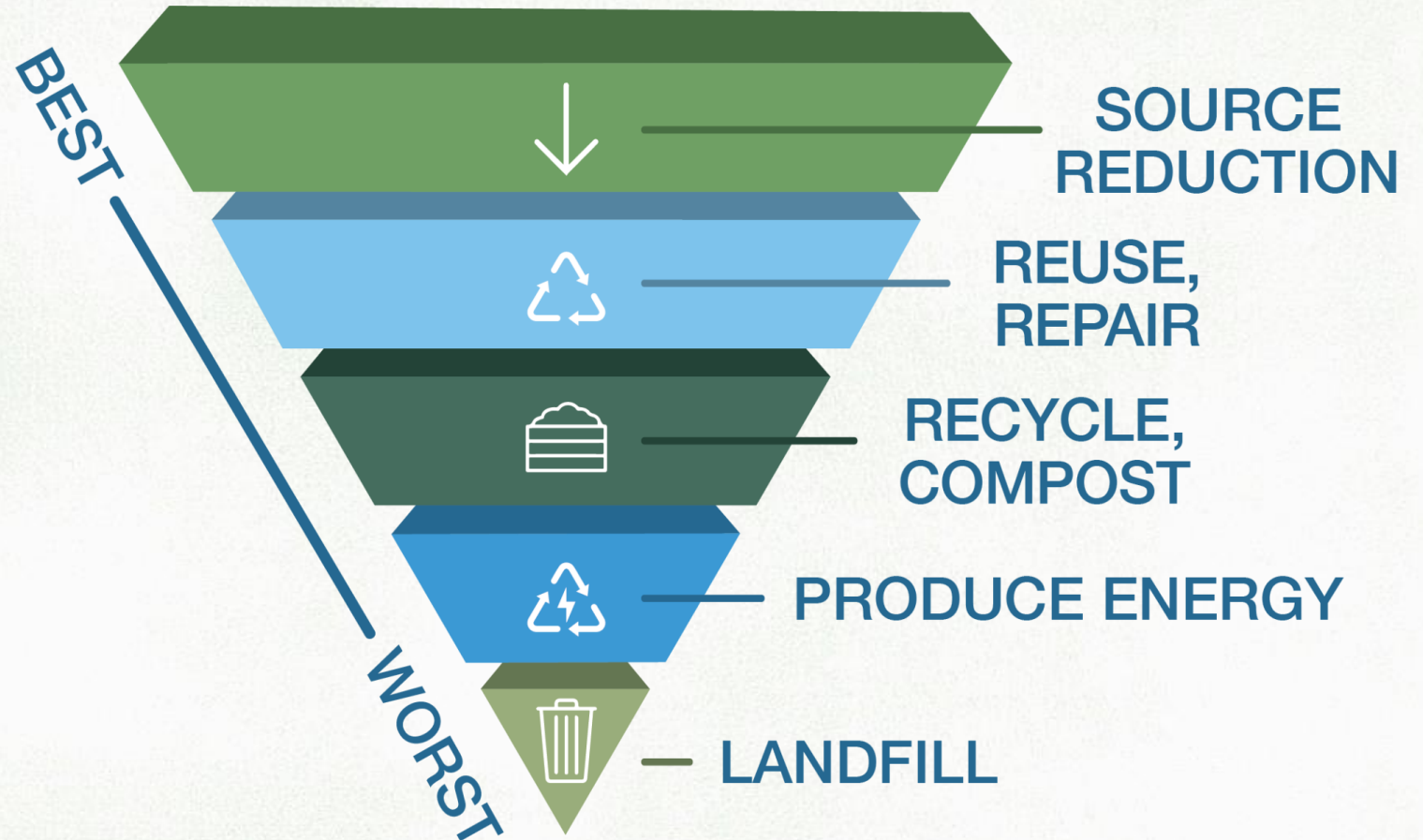
Reduce landfill waste 25% by 2030 (below 2007 baseline) and divert 50% of food waste by 2025.

Remember: Reduce first!

While waste diversion through composting is an important part of our operation, the best method of waste management is to reduce overall waste.

This inverted triangle is known as the Hierarchy of Waste and demonstrates the highest and best strategies for managing waste, based on overall environmental impact.

For resources on how you can reduce single-use materials and opt for reusables on campus, go to:
sustainable.pitt.edu/reuse



Where you'll find compost bins at Pitt:

- Bathrooms
- Kitchenettes & lounges
- Three-bin collection areas (WPU, Hillman)



For an up-to-date list of buildings with compost collection:

sustainable.pitt.edu/compost/

Waste Collection @ Pitt

Recycling

Trash

Grey, white or
clear bags



Black bags



Compost

Light green
compostable bags



General Compost Signage

Compost



All Food Scraps
(includes fruit, vegetables,
meat, dairy, bread)



Napkins, Tissues,
Paper Towels,
Pizza Boxes &
Soiled Paper



Tea Bags, Coffee Grounds &
Filters & Compostable
K-pods (Tayst, OneCup)



Compostable Dinnerware,
Cups & Utensils
(labeled BPI-certified
or compostable)



University of
Pittsburgh

sustainable.pitt.edu/compost

Questions? E-mail sustainability@pitt.edu

Bathroom Compost Signage

Compost



All Food Scraps
(includes fruit, vegetables,
meat, dairy, bread)



Napkins, Tissues, Paper Towels,
Pizza Boxes & Soiled Paper

Not Accepted:

Plastic, Recyclables,
Non-compostable K-pods,
Non-BPI Coffee Cups (i.e. Starbucks)

Items Accepted in Compost

ALL Food:

- Fruits & Veg
- Starches
- Grains
- Meat
- Bones
- Eggs
- Dairy
- Oils & Fats



Items Accepted in Compost

Paper products:

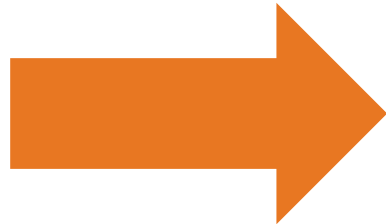
- Unlined paper products (paper towels, napkins, fiber plates)
- Untreated wooden products
- Cardboard (no tape or lining. Can be wet or greasy)



Items Accepted in Compost

Compostable Servingware

- Poly Lactic Acid (PLA): Made from plants, looks like plastic
- Used to line bowls/cups/plates
- Composts only at commercial scale (not backyard), like Pitt's composter
- Look for **BPI** logo



Items Accepted in Compost

If ordering from Pitt Catering Co or using servingware from Pitt EATS locations, all single-use servingware except Hot Cups and Lids is **BPI-certified compostable**

Compostable Dinnerware



Plates



Soup cups



Soup lids



Napkin



Wooden Stir Sticks



Cold Cups



Utensils



Sleeves

Non-Compostable Dinnerware



Hot Cups



Hot Lids

Common Composting Mistakes

Why aren't these compostable?

Many food packages that look like paper are lined with films or coatings to contain liquids or resist grease.

While they look like paper, the multiple materials they are made from are not compostable or recyclable – they must go in the trash.

For more info on food packaging films & linings, check out this [video from MEL Chemistry](#).



Kraft to-go containers



Standard coffee cups



Drink cartons



Decorative/lined paper plates

When in doubt, throw it out!

Commercial Compost:

Where does it go?

Pitt's compost is collected by AgRecycle, a commercial composter located in Washington PA.

AgRecycle uses a windrow composting process, pictured here.

After it is processed, material is screened to several different sizes sold as garden and agricultural fertilizer.

Pitt Sustainability



AGRECYCLE
FROM FORGOTTEN FERTILE
THE WORLD'S FINEST COMPOST SINCE 1991.

Commercial Compost: Contamination



AgRecycle cannot accept compost that is contaminated.

If AgRecycle comes to pick up from their yellow dumpsters and the load is contaminated, as pictured above, they must reject the load. Otherwise, they risk contamination in their overall composting operation, as pictured on the right.



Waste Collection @ Pitt

To reduce the possibility of a rejected compost dumpster pickup, Pitt's custodial staff must dispose the entire contents of a visibly contaminated compost bin in the landfill. Pitt's custodial contract does not permit manual sorting.

If the compost is uncontaminated, custodial staff will collect it in their regular rounds in one container, and separate based on bag color into the appropriate dumpster. For more information, check out this [video on Materials & Waste Handling at Pitt](#).



**Do your part to reduce contamination.
When in doubt, throw it out!**

Successful Waste Diversion

Tips to Reduce Contamination:

- Eliminate individual office/cubicle trash and recycling bins
- Consolidate waste receptacles so compost, recycling and trash bins are next to one another in common areas
- Hang signage ([available on our website](#)) on or above bins
- Annually review compost & recycling rules with your team

Recycle



Single Stream Recycling

All recyclables should be empty, clean and dry.



Paper
Flattened Cardboard,
Magazines, Newspaper,
Office & Glossy Paper,
Paperboard, Mail, & Books



Metal
Aluminum, Tin, & Steel
Containers & Aluminum Foil



Plastic
Bottles, Jugs, Jars, &
Containers



Glass
Bottles, Jugs, Jars, &
Containers

Not Accepted:
To-Go Hot Beverage Cups,
Pizza Boxes, Keurig Cups, Straws, Lids,
Batteries, Light Bulbs, Electronics,
Hazardous Materials & Medical Waste



Compost



All Food Scraps
(includes fruit, vegetables,
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Compostable Dinnerware,
Cups & Utensils
(labeled BPI-certified
or compostable)



Napkins, Tissues,
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Pizza Boxes &
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Tea Bags, Coffee Grounds &
Filters & Compostable
K-cups (Tayst, OneCup)

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Landfill



Foam Cups & Containers,
Packing Material &
To Go Coffee Cups



Plastic Bags & Wrappers



Plastic Utensils, Straws, & Lids

Not Accepted:
Recyclables, Batteries, Light Bulbs,
Electronics, Toner Cartridges,
Hazardous Materials & Medical Waste



Questions? Email zerowaste@pitt.edu

Diversion Signage

Download and print Pitt-approved Compost, Recycle, and Landfill signage in multiple sizes and orientation (even bumper stickers!) at: Sustainable.pitt.edu/campus-culture/zerowaste/signage

Recycle



8.5×11 SIGN

11×17 SIGN

BUMPER STICKER (*PHOTOS*)

BUMPER STICKER (*NO PHOTOS*)

EVENT ARROW POSTER

For more zero waste resources, head to: sustainable.pitt.edu/zerowaste

Pitt Sustainability

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Campus & Culture

Events

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Zero Waste: Recycle, Compost, & Divert



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Questions? Get in touch!

Sustainability– sustainability@pitt.edu

Facilities Management – zerowaste@pitt.edu

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