

Reducing Food Waste: We Can Do It!

presented by the National Greening Fire Team



Vision: Achieving net-zero environmental impact on all large fire incidents by 2030

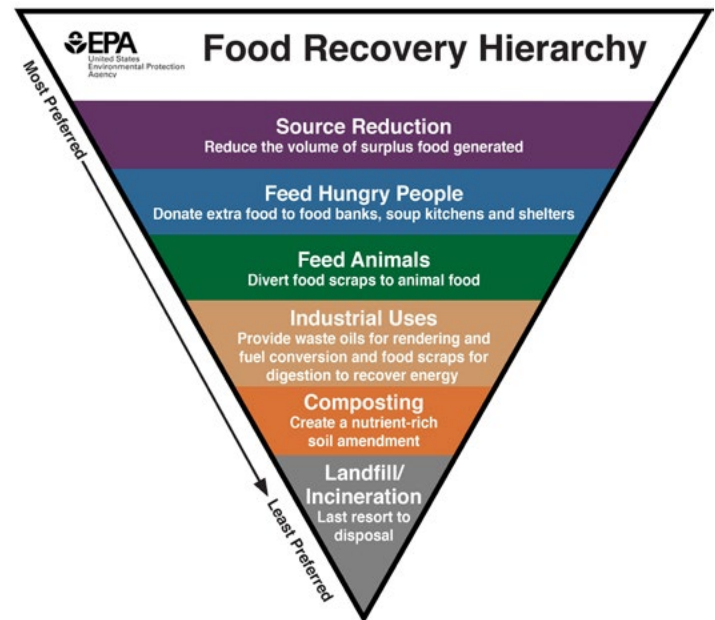
Mission: Integrate sustainable practices on incidents and within the fire community

Why

- Executive Order 14057 directs Federal agencies to achieve net-zero emissions from operations, and to divert waste, including food and compostable material, away from landfills.
- Incidents can save money on waste hauling costs by reducing what goes to the landfill.
- “Food recovery” can keep food out of landfills by feeding people and livestock or creating compost.
- Food waste in landfills emits methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

What

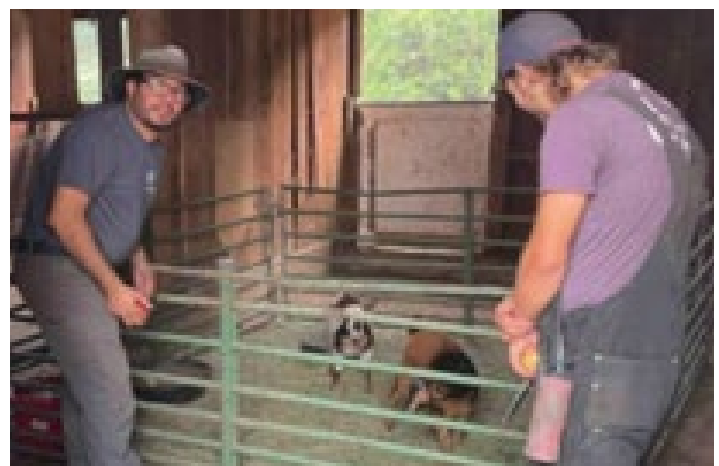
- In 2021, incident recycling vendors diverted 47,800 pounds of food to people and livestock that would have otherwise been landfilled.
- When feasible, the optional food waste and compost management services can help incidents move the needle toward diverting 75 percent of waste from landfills.
- Compostable items include: uneaten food scraps from hot meals (breakfast and dinner), unused food (raw or cooked) from catering vendors, expired or uneaten meat, dairy, sandwiches, etc.



Environmental Protection Agency guidance offers a hierarchy to help reduce food waste.



About 250 pounds of daily food waste (per 100 people) was observed on the 2019 Cellar Fire. USDA Forest Service photo.



Using food scraps to feed livestock is one option to divert the materials from landfills. USDA Forest Service photo.

Food Waste and Compost Management Services

These optional services include:

- Onsite set-up, maintenance, and tear-down of incident composting equipment.
- Collection and sorting of food waste (e.g., meat, plants, dairy, and compostable service ware).
- Sanitary sorting and storage of all waste material.
- Collecting, hauling, and processing food scraps from remote camps.

How To Get Started

1. The onsite incident recycling vendor notifies the logistics section chief (LSC) if food waste/compost management services are feasible and helps establish a successful program.
2. LSC decides if food waste/compost management services will be used for the incident.
3. All key players (see below) should support the common goal of reducing food waste to landfill.

Key Players

It takes a team to reduce food waste, including:

- Logistics section chief and facilities unit leader
- Food unit leader
- Catering vendor
- Recycling/composting vendor
- Food waste/compost facility or outlet

Food Waste Storage and Safety

There will be no increased logistical burden for incident personnel. The recycling vendor is self-sufficient, and:

- Brings all necessary supplies, staff, and waste knowledge.
- Secures compost receptacles to ensure a clean fire camp and reduce the risk of spillage and animal incursions.
- Cleans receptacles and uses appropriate liners to minimize odor and insects.
- Sorts all food waste to reduce contamination.



With the help of compost management services, crews on the Schneider Springs Fire diverted over **2,500 pounds of food waste** from landfills. USDA Forest Service photo.

More Information

- National [Greening Fire Team](#)
- Find compost facilities: findacomposter.com
- [Composting benefits](#)
- [Incident recycling](#)
- [Recycling Quick Guide](#)
- [Dixie Fire Recycling Report](#)
- [Schneider Springs Fire Incident Report](#)

Questions

Contact the National Greening Fire Team at SM.FS.greeningfire@usda.gov.



www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/sustainable-ops