

Rhode Island Wasted Food Reduction: From Policy to Practice



Rhode Island Food Waste Ban

The State of Rhode Island has a food waste ban that has been in effect since 2016. The law was created to address two issues: supporting the local economy and reducing the volume of waste going to the Central Landfill.

The [Central Landfill](#) is the only one in the state, and wasted food makes up a staggering 19% of incoming material — over 700 tons per day!

Much of this is food that could be donated, helping the 1-in-8 Rhode Island households who have food insecurity. The remaining food scraps can go to feed livestock, generate biogas fuel, and replenish valuable nutrients back into our soils.

Why should my business reduce wasted food?

There are many reasons to minimize wasted food, including more efficient operations, lower overall food and waste management costs, improved cleanliness, improved employee satisfaction, and more! Creating less waste at the source, also known as food waste prevention, is the most financially-effective option and can significantly improve your bottom line by reducing costs at every step of your operations.



Who does the food waste ban affect?

The following entities are required to separate food material for donation, animal feed, compost, anaerobic digestion, or other non-trash option. Businesses, institutions, and schools can estimate their amounts of food waste using tools such as the [RecyclingWorks Food Waste Estimation Guide](#).

Businesses with more than 2 tons (roughly one full 5-yard dumpster) per week.

Colleges & Universities with more than 1 ton (eight 64-gallon carts) per week.

K-12 Schools with more than 0.6 tons (four 64-gallon carts) per week.

Business sectors may include commercial wholesalers or distributors, industrial food manufacturers or processors, supermarkets, resorts or conference centers, banquet halls, restaurants, educational or religious institutions, research institutions, military installations, prison corporations, hospitals or other medical care institutions, breweries, and casinos.

How can I comply with the food waste ban?

Optimize wasted food management by practicing strategies across the [US EPA's Wasted Food Scale](#). CET offers no-cost assistance, and has created detailed guidance documents on wasted food reduction, food donation, and food scrap diversion strategies:

- [Source Reduction Guidance](#)
- [Food Donation Guidance](#)
- [Food Waste Separation Guidance](#)

If you are interested in starting a wasted food reduction program, contact CET at (888) 813-8552 or wastedfood@cetonline.org.

