

SOLID WASTE

glossary

biodegradable: the capability of a material to break down easily and relatively quickly by biological means, returning to the environment.

circular economy: an economic system in which resources are re-used instead of extracted, products are designed for reuse, advanced recycling collection systems are in place and waste is ultimately removed from the system.

compost: organic material (such as yard trimmings or food waste) that can be used as a soil amendment or a medium to grow plants.

energy recovery: any process that converts non-recyclable waste materials into usable electricity, heat, or fuel, including combustion, anaerobic digestion, and landfill gas recovery.

environmental justice: the right of all people and communities to equal treatment and meaningful involvement in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws and policies.

e-waste: any electrical equipment or electronic device that is near or at the end of its useful life, including electronics that are destined for reuse, recycling, or disposal. Components of e-waste can be harmful to humans and the environment when recycled or disposed of improperly.

greenhouse gas (GHG): a gas which allow sunlight to enter the atmosphere freely, then absorb infrared radiation and trap heat in the atmosphere. Common examples include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, chlorofluorocarbons, and ozone.

hazardous waste: a waste that is potentially harmful to human health or the environment.

incinerator: a disposal system that burns solid waste or other materials.

landfill: a disposal area where garbage is piled and then covered with dirt and topsoil.

leachate: liquid (such as rainwater) that filters through a landfill and becomes contaminated.

Life cycle analysis (LCA): also known as life cycle assessment, an evaluation of the total environmental impact of a product that accounts for every input and output throughout the product's life, including design, materials needed, production, use and disposal.

planned obsolescence: a strategy for developing products that ensures it will become out-of-date or unusable within a known period of time, guaranteeing future demand for replacement products.

recycling: the act of collecting, sorting, and reprocessing old materials including glass, metals, and some plastics into usable materials.

solid waste: a non-liquid, non-gaseous category of waste from non-toxic household and commercial sources.

source reduction: the process of reducing waste by buying and consuming fewer things.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): 17 interconnected goals that provide individualized guidelines and targets to help every nation develop sustainably, protecting the planet and ensuring all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The SDGs are meant to build on the Millennium Development Goals (2000 - 2015) and also focus attention on addressing new problems such as climate change, economic inequality, and sustainable consumption among other priorities.

zoning laws: rules or laws within an urban area that dictate what sort of activities, behaviors, or construction are acceptable and which are not.