

## Safely Disposing Of Waste Meat, Poultry, and Fish Material Guidance and FAQs

Disposal of waste meat, poultry, and fish material must be carefully managed to protect public health and the environment. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) regulate the collection, handling, and disposal of animal tissue for the following purposes:

- Prevent the spread of disease to people, such as anthrax, rabies, botulism and Salmonellosis;
- Prohibit fraudulent activity that diverts contaminated, diseased and unclean animal tissue into food for humans;
- Prevent the spread of disease to animals, including livestock and poultry;
- Protect the environment from inappropriate and illegal dumping of discarded animal tissue; and
- Encourage the recycling of waste products and reduce the amount of animal material disposed in landfills.

Meat, poultry, and fish material that is not fit for human consumption is sent to renderers that process these materials into fats, oils, and protein for feed in the animal, poultry, and pet food industries, as well as ingredients in soaps, paints and varnishes, cosmetics, explosives, toothpaste, pharmaceuticals, leather, textiles, and lubricants.

Many government agencies encourage composting food waste (including animal, poultry, and fish waste) to divert these materials from landfills and to help meet statewide solid waste diversion goals. The suggested order for management of food waste is: (1) prevent food waste, (2) feed people, (3) convert to animal feed and/or rendering, and (4) compost. Additional information on each of these options is available on the CalRecycle website at <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Organics/Food/>. CalRecycle regulations<sup>1</sup> prohibit the composting of unprocessed mammalian tissue (except in the case of an authorized research project) because of public health and safety concerns associated with mammalian tissue.

CDFA regulations<sup>2, 3</sup> require parts and products of animals generated by certain food-processing establishments to be disposed of through licensed renderers or pet food processors. Those food-

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<sup>1</sup> Title 14, CCR, Section 17855.2.

(a) The composting of unprocessed mammalian tissue, including but not limited to, flesh, organs, hide, blood, bone and marrow is prohibited, except when from the food service industry, grocery stores, or residential food scrap collection, or as part of a research composting operation for the purpose of obtaining data on pathogen reduction or other public health, animal health, safety, or environmental concern, in accordance with section 17862.

<sup>2</sup> Title 3, CCR, Section 1180.39.

Any parts or products of animals disposed of by inspected establishments, retail stores, custom slaughterers and custom processors and which are not intended for use as human food shall be disposed of through licensed renderers, licensed pet food processors, licensed collection centers or other method approved by the Director.

<sup>3</sup> Title 3, CCR, Section 1180.41. Transporters of parts or products of animals, which are not intended for use as human food, including those operating under public authority, shall register with the Director the destination and method of disposal of the inedible and condemned material.

Vehicles and containers used by transporters shall be kept clean.



processing establishments are required to obtain a permit from CDFA, which specifies where animal material is disposed and who may transport it. Transporters of animal parts and products must also register with CDFA.

CDFA and CalRecycle have developed the following list of Frequently Asked Questions to provide guidance to generators, haulers, and solid waste facilities in safely managing waste meat, poultry, and fish materials in California. If you have concerns or suggestions regarding this document, please send comments to Ken Decio at [Ken.Decio@CalRecycle.ca.gov](mailto:Ken.Decio@CalRecycle.ca.gov)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Generators

#### What materials are regulated?

All meat and poultry material from the following businesses:

- All establishments inspected by the United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety Inspection Service, or California Department of Food and Agriculture
- All retail establishments that handle waste meat, poultry, and fish products
  - butcher shops
  - delicatessens
  - grocery stores, supermarkets
  - large retail stores that also sell fresh or frozen meat
- Custom exempt facilities (e.g. cut and wrap operations)

Waste meat, poultry, and fish material from restaurants and residents is not regulated. It is handled together with other commercial and household solid wastes.

#### How should I dispose of waste meat and poultry material?

A business like those listed in Question 1 must have a permit from CDFA that authorizes where the material may be disposed unless the business generates a very small amount of material.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> CDFA is proposing the following regulation: Title 3, CCR, Section 1180.46

(b) Inspected establishments, retail stores, custom slaughterers, and custom processors that have only a small amount of parts or products of animals to dispose of may place them in a container for removal by a waste disposal company or public waste utility if the amount does not exceed 4 pounds on any day or 60 pounds during any month, and the gross sales of meat and poultry do not exceed \$1,000 per month, adjusted for inflation from the date of this regulation and further provided that such practice does not violate any law of any other government unit.



**How long can I store meat and poultry waste?**

This would vary according to the temperature, type, or condition of the material and storage methods. Contact your local health department for further advice on storage methods and times.

**Where do I find a service provider?**

CDFA maintains a list of licensed collection centers, haulers, and rendering service providers, as well as additional information pertaining to animal food waste.  
[http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/Animal\\_Health/Disaster\\_Preparedness.html](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/Animal_Health/Disaster_Preparedness.html)

**What if rendering service is not offered in my area?**

Businesses must still apply for and receive a permit from CDFA that specifies where and how the material will be disposed.

**Can I self-haul meat and poultry waste? If yes, what are the rules?**

Yes, but a permit must still be obtained from CDFA.

## **Haulers**

**Can a person or business collect and transport waste meat and poultry from inspected establishments?**

Only if the person or business is registered or licensed by CDFA.

## **Solid Waste Facilities**

**Do I have to consider the source of the waste to determine if it should be coming to my facility?**

The generator and hauler should be working together to determine the appropriate transportation and disposal options. However, if you receive loads consisting of mostly

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meat and poultry waste, you should take the appropriate steps to assure the material is delivered to a facility as described in Question 4.

### **Is the disposal of fish waste regulated?**

Disposal of fish waste is regulated by CalRecycle. CDFA regulates the recycling, processing, and conversion of fish material and carcasses, because these activities constitute rendering. Those rendering facilities are required to be licensed and adhere to standards of processing and sanitation to prevent spread of disease and prevent nuisances.

## **Regulatory Agencies**

### **What are the roles of the agencies involved in the regulation of the handling and disposal of meat, poultry, and fish waste?**

- **California Department of Food and Agriculture:** Regulates disposal of meat and poultry material from all operations inspected by USDA & CDFA, as well as retail stores; regulates the rendering industry, including fish waste, and pet food businesses processing or producing fresh or frozen animal tissue; regulates the transportation of animal parts and material, including carcasses.
- **CalRecycle:** Provides general regulatory oversight of the handling and disposal of solid waste, concurs in the issuance of solid waste facilities permits, and certifies and evaluates locally designated enforcement agencies (typically city or county environmental health departments).
- **Local Enforcement Agencies:** CalRecycle-certified LEAs are responsible for implementing state solid waste law, including inspections, permitting, and enforcement.
- **California Department of Public Health:** Plays a supporting role in the enforcement of State retail food laws by providing technical expertise to evaluate processes and procedures and to answer technical and legal inquiries from local agencies, industry, and consumers.
- **Local Environmental Health Agencies:** Enforce provisions of the State's retail food laws and all applicable local laws.





## Resources

### **California Department of Food and Agriculture**

[http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Meat and Poultry Inspection/MPI Home.html](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Meat_and_Poultry_Inspection/MPI_Home.html)

### **CalRecycle**

Food Scrap Management: <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Organics/Food/>

Local Assistance & Market Development Contacts:

<http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/LGCentral/Reports/Contacts.aspx>

Staff Assignments by Local Enforcement Agency Jurisdiction:

<http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/LEA/CountyAssign.asp>

### **California Fats, Oils, and Grease Work Group**

<http://www.calfog.org/>

### **National Renderers Association**

<http://nationalrenderers.org/>

