



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Leading Iowans in Caring For Our Natural Resources

Understanding Iowa's New Composting Rules

Iowa Recycling and Solid Waste Conference

October 6, 2026

Understanding Iowa's New Composting rules

- Background and process
- New structure of Solid Waste rules
- Overview of the new rule
 - Feedstock categories
 - Compost facility tiers
 - Requirements for each tier
- Operator certification
- Transition to the new requirements



Iowa Code 455D.9(3)

“The department shall adopt rules which define yard waste and provide for the safe and proper method of composting yard waste and other organic materials.”

The Long Journey -

- **Sept 2022:** Multi-stakeholder group initial kickoff
- **Jan 2023:** Executive Order 10 signed
- **Sept 2025:** Regulatory Analysis
- **Jan 2026:** Notice of Intended Action (NOIA)
- **June 2026:** Amended NOIA (removed animal composting)
- **July 2026:** Adopted & Final approved by EPC
- **Aug 19, 2026:** Published in Administrative Bulletin
- **Sept 23, 2026: Effective Date** (Expires Sept 2031)



Rulemaking Objectives

Workgroup & DNR Goals

- Provide clarity and consistency
- Requirements that match the volume and type of feedstocks
- Accommodate growth in the industry and changes to technology – not writing rules just for today but for tomorrow
- Regulations that set the composting industry up for success while protecting the environment

EO 10 Mandates

- Increase public input in the rulemaking process
- Strictly adhere to the rulemaking authority granted by the legislature
- Eliminate rules that do not provide substantiated benefits to Iowans
- Adopt the least costly way to realize the public benefits of the rule
- Reduce size (page and word count) of the Iowa Administrative Code
- Reduce restrictive language
- Avoid verbatim repetition of statutory language

567-100 Scope of Title-Definitions – Rules of Practice

Contains overarching scope of title, unified definitions, basic permit rules, construction, operations, closure, transfer, and ERRAP requirements.

567-101 Sanitary Disposal Projects

- Division I—Landfill-Specific Requirements:
- Division II—Municipal Solid Waste Landfills
- Division III—Industrial Landfills
- Division IV—Coal Combustion Residuals Landfills
- Division V—Solid Waste Transfer Stations
- Division VI—Solid Waste Incinerator Operator Certification
- Division VII—Infectious Waste Treatment and Disposal: Reserved.
- Division VIII—Financial Assurance

567-102 Solid Waste Management

• Division I—Organic Materials Compost Facilities

- Division II—Land Application of Waste
- Division III—Landfarming of Petroleum Contaminated Soil
- Division IV—Beneficial Use
- Division V—Waste Tire Management
- Division VI—Special Waste Authorizations
- Division VII—Discarded Appliance Demanufacturing
- Division VIII—Cathode Ray Tube Recycling

Feedstock categories 567-102.3

Type A

Yard waste, wood waste, crop residuals



Type B

Pre and post consumer food residuals, dead animals, manure, bedding



Type C

Industrial process waste, biosolids, diapers



Exemptions 567-102.4

- **Backyard Composting:** Types A & B generated from a single household and composted on-site.
- **<2 Tons/Yr:** Up to 2 tons per year of Type A & B feedstocks generated off-site, used where composted.
- **Manure:** Manure managed under Chapter 65 or applicable Iowa laws.
- **Dead Animals + Bulking Agent:** Composting carcasses with wood chips or poultry litter (under IDALS authority).



Removal of animal composting regs.

Legal Context: *Pet Memories, Inc. vs. Iowa DNR & Iowa Code § 167.2* clarified authority over animal mortality disposal.

- Composting *only* dead animals and bulking agents is exempt from 567-102.
- If carcasses are co-composted with other feedstocks (e.g. food waste), DNR rules apply.
- Complaints referred to IDALS.
- DNR will investigate water quality violations.



Facility types:

	Tier 1 102.6	Tier 2 102.7	Tier 3 102.8	Tier 4 102.9
Type A & B generated On premises	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Type A generated off premises	Up to 250 tons per year, A & B combined	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Type B generated off premise		Up to 250 tons per year	Up to 1,000 tons per year	Unlimited
Type C	None	None	None	Unlimited

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
General Requirements	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Notification		Yes	Yes	
Annual report		Yes	Yes	Yes
Certified operator		Yes	Yes	Yes
Additional operating requirements			Yes	Yes
Permit required				Yes
Additional design requirements				Yes
Product testing				Yes
Closure Requirements				Yes
Financial Assurance				Yes

Permit-by-rule vs. individual permits

Permit-by-rule (Tiers 1, 2 & 3)

- May or may not be required to submit a notification
- Follows a set of rules
- Little flexibility
- Used for smaller facilities with little variation

Individual permits (Tier 4)

- Application process
- Has requirements specific to the facility in a permit in addition to the rules
- Some flexibility in the permit requirements
- Used for larger, more complex facilities or difficult to manage wastes

General requirements for Solid Waste Management (SWM) 567-100.9

- No open burning
- Litter confined to property; litter beyond property collected at end of day
- No scavenging
- Prevent vectors
- Equipment designated in the plans or its equivalent will be used
- Internal roads all weather, maintained in good condition.
- Signage for sites open to the public

General requirements for all compost facilities 567-102.5

Siting

Set back distances in feet:

- 500 residence
- 200 public wells
- 100 private wells
- 50 property lines
- 100 streams, lakes, ponds
- Outside of wetlands

Design

- No run on from adjacent land
- Manage contact and storm water as per 567-60, if applicable
- Minimize ponding
- Composting takes place on asphalt, concrete, compacted aggregate or clay.
- Type A only composting may have compacted soil
- In-vessel: no leaks, no vectors, provides aeration
- Ground water must be at least 12 inches below surface (except in-vessel)

General requirements for all compost facilities 567-102.5 (continued)

Operational requirements

- Maintain aerobic conditions
- No unsecured trash
- Non-compostable waste removed or stored
- Minimize odors, dust noise, litter, contact water, fire, vectors
- Cured compost stored no more than 18 months without approval
- Human made inert materials less than 1.5% by weight and less than ½ inch

Tier 1

Unlimited Type A & B generated on site, up to 250 tons / year generated offsite.

- Follow the general requirements

**That's
All!**

Tier 2

**unlimited Type A & B generated on site; unlimited type A generated off site;
250 tons / year Type B generated offsite.**

- General requirements
- Notification
- Annual report
- Certified compost operator (beginning September, 2027)

Tier 3 567-102.8

Unlimited type A; unlimited type B generated on premises, up to 1,000 ton / year Type B from off premises

- General requirements
- Notification
- Annual report
- Certified compost operator (beginning September, 2027)
- Develop and follow an operations plan
- Feedstocks with free liquid mixed with dry feedstock
- Contact water shall be directed to containment, recycling or treatment system
- Type B feedstock in active compost pile, or leakproof container or mixed with bulking agent by end of day

Tier 4

567-102.9 Any amount of Type A, B, or C feedstock

- General requirements
- Annual report
- Certified compost operator
- Permit required
- Design prepared by engineer
- Storm water management plan – 25 year, 24 hour storm event
- Operations plan
- Closure plan

Tier 4 Design requirements 102.9(2)

Receiving, processing and production:

- Support the equipment, materials and operations
- Slope to prevent ponding and transmit water to containment structure
- Wearing surface of asphalt , concrete, compacted aggregate over 12 inches recompact clay
- 12 inches above water table

Containment structure for contact water:

- 12 inches recompact clay
- 5 feet above water table

Existing facilities

- Submit a compliance plan by September 2027
- Schedule to be in compliance by September 2031.

Tier 4 Additional operating requirements 102.9(3)

- Access limited with lockable gate
- Putrescible materials incorporated within 24 hours unless storage of materials is in permit
- Processing time and temperatures meet Process to Further reduce Pathogens (PFRP)
- Containment system for contact water
- Visual inspection of the facility done on a quarterly basis

Compost operator certification 567-102.11

- **3-Year Renewal Cycle:** Begins July 1, 2026. (2029, 2032, etc.)
- **Initial Requirement:** Complete 24-hour foundational course.
- **Continuing Ed:** 8 contact hours required per 3-year cycle.
 - Do not need contact hours the same 3 year cycle as 24 hour course.
- **Compliance Date:** Certified operator required for Tiers 2 & 3 by September 23, 2027.

Transition for Existing Facilities

Permitted to Tier 4

- Permit will be updated when renewed or amended
- One year to submit compliance plan; 4 more years to implement it

Permitted to Tier 1, 2, 3 or exempt

- Submit voluntary recission
- Submit notification for Tier 2 or 3

Small or yard waste only to tier 2

- No need to renotify
- Certified operator by September 23, 2027

Small or yard waste only to tier 1

- Let DNR know now or when you receive annual report notification

Animal only composting

- Follow up with IDALS

Thank you!

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<https://www.iowadnr.gov/environmental-protection/land-quality/waste-planning-programs/solid-waste/programs>

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