



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report and Recycler License

These FAQs are available online with live links at the Annual Recycling and Reuse Report and Recycler

License website: seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense

Updated December 2022

- Why does the City require recyclers to report their recycling and reuse activities and to get a license to operate in Seattle?
- Who must report their recycling and reuse activities?
- What is a recycling “Collector”?
- What is a recycling “Processor”?
- What does my business or non-profit have to report?
- How does my business or non-profit report its recycling activities?
- Where can I find instructions on how to use the Recycler Reporting Web App?
- Where can I find instructions on how to use the Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report Form in Microsoft Excel?
- How does the City define different recyclable and reusable materials?
- How do I measure the materials I collected or processed in tons?
- What should I report if I don’t have weights for the recyclables and/or reusables I collected and/or processed?
- How do I report co-mingled or mixed recycling?
- How do I report reuse?
- Can I submit to Seattle the same recycling and/or composting facilities report I prepared for the Washington State Department of Ecology?
- Will the information I provide in the annual recycling and reuse report be publicly available?
- What happens if my business or non-profit doesn’t submit a complete and accurate Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report?
- How do I get a Recycler License?
- What if I have questions about or need help completing the Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report or the Recycler License Application/Renewal?

Why does the City require recyclers to report their recycling and reuse activities and to get a license to operate in Seattle?

Seattle Municipal Code 6.250 requires recyclers, including composters, operating in Seattle to report their recycling and reuse activities and to get a Recycler License in order to provide the City with timely and accurate data on the quantities of recycled materials they collect and/or process so that the City may achieve the most cost-effective system for collection, processing, disposal or recycling of all solid wastes, including construction, demolition and land-clearing wastes generated in the City. Link to Seattle Municipal Code 6.250:

https://library.municode.com/wa/seattle/codes/municipal_code?nodetid=TIT6BURE_SUBTITLE_IVNELICO_C_H6.250COPPREMA.

Who must report their recycling and reuse activities?

Recycling collectors and processors must report their recycling, composting, and reuse activities annually. If your business or non-profit does any of the following activities, you must submit a **Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report** (seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense) each year and get a Recycler License by March 31:

- Collected, processed, or hauled recyclable materials originating in the City of Seattle (regardless of where the materials were delivered to). Construction and demolition recycling facilities that accepted materials from Seattle construction job sites, Seattle businesses, non-profits, or Seattle residents are required to report.
- Provided drop boxes or operated one or more drop-off facilities for recyclable materials in the City of Seattle.
- Operated a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) processing materials originating in the City of Seattle.

What is a recycling “Collector”?

Seattle Municipal Code 6.250 requires annual reporting of collectors and processors of recyclable and reusable materials, including food and yard waste. A “Collector” is defined as:

- A person who operates one or more vehicles for the collection of recyclable materials from residential, commercial, or industrial premises or construction sites in the City; or
- A person engaged in construction, demolition, or land clearing who hauls recyclable materials away from job sites in the City; or
- A person who places drop boxes, kiosks, barrels, or other containers in the City where the public may deposit recyclable materials; or
- A person who maintains one or more business premises in the City where the public may bring recyclable materials, including but not limited to salvaged or surplus building materials and discarded household items and clothing; or
- A person who, as part of regular business activities in the City, transports recyclable materials, including but not limited to product packaging, oils, and food waste, directly from one or more business premises to a recyclable materials processor.

City contractors who pick up residential and/or commercial garbage, recyclable materials, including food and yard waste, are collectors under this definition. Recyclers may be collectors and/or processors. Link to Seattle Municipal Code 6.250:

https://library.municode.com/wa/seattle/codes/municipal_code?nodetid=TIT6BURE_SUBTITLE_IVNELICO_C_H6.250COPPREMA.

What is a recycling “Processor”?

Seattle Municipal Code 6.250 requires annual reporting of collectors and processors of recyclable and reusable materials, including food and yard waste. A "Processor" is defined as:

A person who operates a facility that receives recyclable materials originating in the City from collectors or private individuals where such materials are sorted for marketability by type, quality, or other criteria and then sold directly to the public for reuse or shipped to a recycling firm or facility for further processing.

City contractors who operate transfer stations, materials recovery facilities (MRFs), or other facilities where waste materials are sorted for reshipment or disposal are processors under this definition. Recyclers may be collectors and/or processors.

Link to Seattle Municipal Code 6.250:

https://library.municode.com/wa/seattle/codes/municipal_code?nodetid=TIT6BURE_SUBTITLE_IVNELICO_C_H6.250COPPREMA.

What does my business or non-profit have to report?

You should report on tons of recyclable and reusable materials, including food and yard waste, your business or non-profit received from Seattle (Materials Received) and where those materials then went and how they were used (Destination and Final Use of Materials).

For “Materials Received,” provide the tons of the materials you collected or hauled from Seattle residents, businesses, non-profits, or construction job sites or handled from Seattle sources. Note that the City requires that you itemize recycled materials originating from construction and demolition (C&D) projects and space is provided for C&D materials.

For “Destination and Final Use of Materials,” list the companies to which you sold or delivered recyclable or reusable materials, including construction materials, and the tons sold or delivered to a buyer. If you sold reusable goods to the public, please note this in your **Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report** (seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense).

How does my business or non-profit report its recycling activities?

There are two options for reporting your recycling and reuse activities by March 31. The recommended option is to report using the **Recycler Reporting App**.

1. Report online using the **Recycler Reporting App** at seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense - Recommended (*Business and contact information are retained between years*), or
2. Download an electronic version of the **Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report** (Microsoft Excel) from seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense and email your completed report to SPU_recyclerlicense@seattle.gov.

Where can I find instructions on how to use the Recycler Reporting Web App?

For instructions on how to complete your report in the **Recycler Reporting Web App**, check out the **Recycler Reporting App How To Guide** available at seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense on the right side of the webpage under “Resources.” Or, watch the “how to” video posted on our website: <https://youtu.be/7KYv1eBSy6k>.

If you still have questions, check out the other FAQs for answers, or contact us at SPU_recyclerlicense@seattle.gov.

Where can I find instructions on how to use the Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report Form in Microsoft Excel?

Instructions on how to complete your report in the Excel reporting form appear in the file. They are included on the worksheet labeled “2. Instructions.” You can download the Excel reporting form from the Annual Recycling and Reuse Report and Recycler License website at seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense, or use the direct link: <https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/SPU/AnnualRecycling-ReuseReportForm.xlsx>.

If you still have questions, check out the other FAQs for answers, or contact us at SPU_recyclerlicense@seattle.gov.

How does the City define different recyclable and reusable materials?

- **If reporting in the Recycler Reporting Web App** – Recommended (seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense) - Use the definitions provided in **Recyclable and Reusable Material Type Definitions** available online at seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense on the right side of the webpage under “Resources.”
- **If reporting in Excel** - In the Excel file, use the worksheet named “6. Material Definitions” for definitions of recyclable and/or reusable materials or the **Recyclable and Reusable Material Type Definitions** available online at seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense on the right side of the webpage under “Resources.”

How do I measure the materials I collected or processed in tons?

To determine how many tons of recyclable and/or reusable material you collected and/or processed, consult, if necessary, the **General Measurement Standards and Reporting Guidelines** at seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense to help you convert materials quantities to tons. 2,000 pounds (lbs.) = 1 ton (T.)

- **If reporting in the Recycler Reporting Web App** (seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense) - You can enter the pounds you have for each type of material and the app will help you convert them into tons. There is link below the tons category, “Tons Calculator,” that will convert the weight from pounds (lbs.) to tons (T.).
- **If reporting in Excel** - In the Excel file, use the worksheet named “7. Conversion” with conversion factors to calculate the weight of the recyclable or reusable material you collected or processed.

What should I report if I don't have weights for the recyclables and/or reusables I collected and/or processed?

If you have information on units (e.g., bushels or barrels) of recyclable and/or reusable materials, receipts, vehicle transaction reports, and/or invoices from the vendors that receive your materials, you can use this information to determine the weight of the recyclable and/or reusable material(s) that you report on.

Please contact SPU_Recyclerslicense@seattle.gov if you need more assistance.

How do I report co-mingled or mixed recycling?

If you have co-mingled recycling or mixed recycling, use the category "Other Recycled Materials." In the description, tell us what specific materials are included in your co-mingled or mixed recycling.

How do I report reuse?

If the "Final Use" or "Final Destination" of the recyclable materials you're reporting on is reuse, such as selling salvaged or surplus building materials, used household items and clothing, or repaired computers or appliances, you need to report on or estimate the amount of those materials.

- **If reporting in the Recycler Reporting Web App** (seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense) – When reporting on recyclable material that went to reuse, in the "Final Use" field, select "Reuse" in the dropdown menu. If needed, include a description of material for reuse in the "Final Use" description field.

To determine how many tons of recyclable and/or reusable material you collected and/or processed, consult, if necessary, the **General Measurement Standards and Reporting Guidelines** at seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense to help you convert materials quantities to tons. 2,000 pounds (lbs.) = 1 ton (T.)

- **If reporting in Excel** (seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense) – When reporting on recyclable material that went to reuse, in the "Final Use of Materials," select "Reuse" from the dropdown menu. If needed, include a description of material for reuse in the "Final Use" description field.

To determine how many tons of recyclable and/or reusable material you collected and/or processed, use, if necessary, the worksheet named "7. Conversion" with conversion factors to calculate the weight of the recyclable or reusable material you collected or processed. You may also consult the **General Measurement Standards and Reporting Guidelines** at seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense to help you convert materials quantities to tons. 2,000 pounds (lbs.) = 1 ton (T.)

Can I submit to Seattle the same recycling and/or composting facilities report I prepared for the Washington State Department of Ecology?

No. They are not the same report. The **Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report** (seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense) is required of recycling collectors and processors operating in Seattle to obtain a Recycling Collector/Processor License. The list of recyclable materials in the Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report is similar but not identical to the list of materials in annual report required by the Department of Ecology. The City of Seattle does not accept copies of the Ecology forms.

Why is it important to do the Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report?

Your business or non-profit plays a vital role in the City of Seattle reaching its waste prevention and reduction goals. Your completed **Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report** helps inform recycling and waste prevention services and programs. Based on 2021 reporting, we estimate that businesses and non-profits recycled or composted 197,000 tons of material, or 63.0%. The overall recycling rate for the City is 52.7%.

To learn more about Seattle's recycling goals and progress to date, visit seattle.gov/utilities/about/reports/solid-waste-reports and select the link for "2021 Waste Prevention and Recycling Report."

Will the information I provide in the annual recycling and reuse report be publicly available?

The information you provide in the **Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report (Report)** may be subject to public disclosure. However, you may wish to request confidentiality for certain portions of your Report. If you wish to request confidentiality for portions of your Report, please notify SPU in writing no later than March 31 according to the instructions in the Confidentiality Form on page 5 of the packet you received in the mail. If you would like a copy of the Confidentiality Form, please request one by sending an email to SPU_recyclerlicense@seattle.gov.

What happens if my business or non-profit doesn't submit a complete and accurate Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report?

Failure to submit a complete and accurate **Recycler License Application/Renewal** and **Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report** by March 31 may result in fines and statutory fees of \$500 or more (Seattle Municipal Code 6.202.470).

In addition, an inaccurate or incomplete **Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report** may result in the denial of your **Recycler License Application/Renewal**. The Department of Finance and Administrative Services Consumer Protection Division enforces these penalties and will reach out to you if your license application and recycling report are not received on time.

How do I get a Recycler License?

To obtain your Recycler License, follow these three steps:

1. Complete the **Recycler License Application/Renewal** included in the packet you received in the mail, or download it from seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense,
2. Submit your completed **Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report** online using the **Recycler Reporting App** at seattle.gov/utilities/recyclerlicense or by emailing your Excel file to SPU_recyclerlicense@seattle.gov, and
3. Send the completed **Recycler License Application/Renewal**, along with a check for \$105 payable to “City of Seattle” by March 31, to:

City of Seattle, Department of Finance and Administrative Services
Attn: Amanda Aguirre
700 5th Avenue, Suite 4250
P.O. Box 94785
Seattle, WA 98124-4214
consumerprotection@seattle.gov
(206) 386-1267

What if I have questions about or need help completing the Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report or the Recycler License Application/Renewal?

If you have questions about or need help completing your **Seattle Annual Recycling and Reuse Report**, please contact Sherri Johnson at 206-919-3662 (work mobile phone), 206-684-7446 (office phone) or SPU_recyclerlicense@seattle.gov.