



GLOSSARY

Biodegradable: A material that can be decomposed in nature within a relatively short period of time.

Carbon Footprint: Measures total amount of greenhouse gas emissions released into the environment. Greenhouse gas emissions from all sources are summed up and changed into units of CO₂ equivalent which is used to standardize greenhouse gas emissions and help make comparisons from different time periods and across industries. Carbon emissions are usually measured in metric tons per year (1 metric ton equals 2,204 lbs.).

Commingled Materials: Recyclables that are mixed together – such as plastic bottles, glass and metal containers – that require sorting after collection.

Compost: The relatively stable humus material which is produced when bacteria in soil mixes with degradable trash and garbage to break down the mixture into organic fertilizer.

Cradle-to-Cradle: A design protocol that supports the elimination of waste by recycling materials or products into new or similar products at the end of its intended life, instead of disposing of it.

Design for the Environment (DfE): A design concept that focuses on reducing environmental and human health impacts by thoughtful design and careful material selection.

Ecosystem: The natural interacting system of living and non-living things of the environment.

Emission: Any gas, particle, or vapor release into the environment from a commercial, industrial, or residential source including smokestacks, chimneys, and motor vehicles.

Environmental Impact: Any change that would affect the environment, good or bad, as a result of human activities or services.

Green Energy: Refers to environmentally friendly power and energy that comes from renewable and non-polluting energy sources. Solar, wind, small-scale hydropower, geothermal, and biomass (wood and animal waste, landfill mass) are good examples of primary green energy sources.

Greenhouse Effect: The global warming attributed to a buildup of carbon dioxide or other gases.

Greenhouse Gas: Any gas including carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide that contributes to the greenhouse effect.

Industrial Waste: Undesired materials created from an industrial operation; may be liquid, sludge, solid, or hazardous waste..

Life Cycle Assessment: The process of analyzing a product's entire life from raw materials extraction through manufacturing, delivery, use, and disposal or reuse.



Recyclable: Materials that can be recovered or diverted for recycling or reuse from the waste stream.

- **Commingled Recycling:** Glass, plastic bottles and cans
- **Total Recycling:** Includes cardboard, commingle, mixed paper, steel, compost, and cooking oil

Recycled Content: Refers to the percentage or weight of recycled materials in a product.

Sustainability: "Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (Source: World Commission on Environment and Development)

Toxic: Any material or waste product that can endanger the environment or produce injury and/or loss of life if inhaled, swallowed, or absorbed through the skin.

Trash: Any unwanted or undesirable materials.

Waste: All materials that are leftover and no longer useful to the facility.

Waste-to-Energy (WtE): Process of creating energy in the form of electricity or heat from the incineration of waste.