



Labeling Guidelines for Compostable Plastics Associated with Food Scraps or Yard Trimmings

The goal of these guidelines is to identify compostable plastics associated with food scraps or yard trimmings (e.g., bags, plates, cups, cutlery, trays, and take out or food packaging) which are certified as compostable in commercial or industrial composting facilities. These guidelines should allow the public and retail consumers, material haulers, and processors to distinguish compostable from non-compostable products for proper handling of items after use. The guidelines for labeling compostable plastic products are as follows:

1. Products intended to be composted in a commercial composting facility shall meet ASTM D6400 "Standard Specification for Labeling of Plastics Designed to be Aerobically Composted in Municipal or Industrial Facilities" or ASTM D6868 "Standard Specification for Labeling of End Items that Incorporate Plastics and Polymers as Coatings or Additives with Paper and Other Substrates Designed to be Aerobically Composted in Municipal or Industrial Facilities."
2. Labeling of products, packaging and sales materials or websites for products sold in the U.S. shall comply with pertinent US regulations and guidelines, including the Federal Trade Commission's "Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims" (Part 260) that clearly qualifies the products as suitable for composting only in a commercial composting facility.
3. Each product should be labeled with the word "compostable" along with the qualifying language listed below that is as readily visible and readable by the average person as technically possible and not cost prohibitive. Each product should display the labeling language via printing, embossing, or compostable adhesive stickers and using, when possible, the color green or brown that contrasts with background product color for easy identification. Graphic elements are encouraged

to increase legibility of the word "compostable" and overall product distinction that may include text boxes, stripes, bands, or a green or brown tint of the product. The product shall be labeled with one of the following statements in order of descending preference as technically and economically possible:

- I. "Compostable where accepted in a commercial facility, check in your area," with a 3rd party certification logo for meeting ASTM D6400 or 6868;
 - II. "Compostable where accepted in a commercial facility" with a 3rd party certification logo for meeting ASTM D6400 or 6868;
 - III. "Commercially Compostable where accepted" with 3rd party certification logo for meeting ASTM D6400 or 6868 ("compostable" and logo highest priority for cutlery); or
 - IV. Cutlery or very small products should be labeled at a minimum with: "Compostable" along with 3rd party certification logo (embossing or cutout enhances visibility).
4. A package containing a compostable plastic product should be labeled as follows (as applicable):
- "This product is certified by [insert 3rd party name and logo] to meet ASTM D6400 or ASTM D6868 for being compostable in a commercial compost facility. Commercial compost facilities and/or composting programs may not exist in your area. Check with your local municipality to determine if this product is accepted for composting or recycling. This product has not been certified for home composting."

Plastic bags labeled as "compostable" should not have chasing arrows symbols (including the symbol used for the resin identification code), as removing chasing arrows on bags will not conflict with state laws and reduces confusion.

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About the USCC: The United States Composting Council (USCC) is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to the development, expansion and promotion of the composting industry. For more information visit www.compostingcouncil.org

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