Elementary and Secondary Schools

You can use this fill-in threshold estimation guide to identify if your facility may be subject to the Commercial Food Waste Disposal Ban. If you have any questions, please contact RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts by email (info@recyclingworksma.com) or by calling 1-888-254-5525.

Note: RecyclingWorks now provides separate per-student estimates for elementary, middle, and high schools based on data from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. The elementary and middle school per student estimates are higher than the .5 lbs/student/week metric from an earlier version of this tool. Anecdotal observations suggest that a combination of changes in the National School lunch program, shorter lunch periods, and more frequent breakfast in the classroom offerings have contributed to more food waste, particularly in elementary schools. When estimating food waste at your school, also take into account whether your school has a culinary education program, a centralized kitchen serving other locations, or serves a high percentage of students school lunch (rather than lunch brought from home), as these may result in more food waste.

	Average	Measurement	Material
Students [Elementary School]	1.13	lbs/student/week	Food Waste
Students [Middle School]	0.73	lbs/student/week	Food Waste
Students [High School]	0.35	lbs/student/week	Food Waste
Disposed Waste[1]	45	% of disposed waste by weight	Food Waste

	# of Students	Average Food Waste Measurement	TOTAL Estimated Food Waste Disposed Weekly (lbs)
Students [Elementary School]		× 1.13 lbs/student/week	

	# of Students	Average Food Waste Measurement	TOTAL Estimated Food Waste Disposed Weekly (lbs)
Students [Middle School]		× 0.73 lbs/student/week	

	# of Students	Average Food Waste Measurement	TOTAL Estimated Food Waste Disposed Weekly (lbs)
Students [High School]		× 0.35 lbs/student/week	

	Amount of Disposed Waste Weekly (yd^3)	Average Weight of 1 yd^3 Disposed Waste (1 yd^3 = ~450 lbs)	Average Amount of Disposed Waste Weekly (lbs)	% of Food Waste Disposed Weekly	TOTAL Estimated Food Waste Disposed Weekly (lbs)
Disposed Waste[1]		× 450 lbs		x 45% of disposed waste by weight	

If the "TOTAL Estimated Food Waste Disposed Weekly" in the final column is greater than 2,000 lbs, then your facility may be subject to the Commercial Food Waste Disposal Ban. If you do not have a food waste diversion program in place, contact RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts by email or by calling (888) 254-5525, or visit the RecyclingWorks website to learn how to begin a program today!

If you have **1,770 elementary school students**, then:

1.13 lbs/student/week * 1,770 students = 2,000 lbs/week = 1 ton of food waste per week

If you have **2,740 middle school students**, then:

.73 lbs/student/week * 2,740 students = 2,000 lbs/week = 1 ton of food waste per week

If you have **5,715 high school students**, then:

.35 lbs/student/week * 5,715 students = 2,000 lbs/week = 1 ton of food waste per week

If you fill **1 trash dumpster at 4 cubic yards 3 times per week**, then:

450 lbs * (1 trash dumpster *4 yd3 * 3 pickups/week) = 5,400 lbs of total disposed waste/week

5,400 lbs * 45% of total waste = 2,430 lbs/week = 1.2 tons of food waste in one week

[1] The equation based on weight of disposed waste (above) assumes a weight of 450 lbs/yd^3 for mixed commercial waste materials. It was derived using the median value of EPA's standard conversion factor: 1yd^3 of commercial-industrial waste = 300 to 600 lbs. You may choose to change this number to best represent your operations.