



sanitation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 15, 2018

CONTACT: Press Office / 646-885-5020

Press Release #18-13

www.nyc.gov/sanitation

New Rules Regarding Food Waste Separation Announced for Additional City Businesses

Food Waste from Some Larger Restaurants, Chain Restaurants and Grocery Stores Will Now be Required to go to Beneficial Use, Not to Landfills

The New York City Department of Sanitation announced today new rules expanding the City's commercial organic waste separation program. Some larger restaurants, chain restaurants and grocery stores will now be required to put their food waste to beneficial use, instead of sending it to landfills where it releases methane gas, a harmful greenhouse gas and major contributor to climate change. The rules, published in the [City Record](#), are expected to divert about 50,000 tons of food waste from landfills every year.

Businesses covered under the new rules include:

- Restaurants with a floor area of at least 15,000 square feet;
- Chain restaurants with 100 or more locations in the City that operate under common ownership or control, are individually franchised outlets of a parent business, or do business under the same corporate name; and
- Food retailers (grocery stores) having a floor area space of at least 25,000 square feet.

“Businesses need to reduce, reuse, and recycle their food scraps and waste. It’s critical to meeting the City’s greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals,” said Sanitation Commissioner Kathryn Garcia. “The Department incorporated feedback it received from a public hearing and from citizens, business owners, industry representatives and other interested stakeholders as we worked through the rulemaking process. We are beginning our outreach to the covered businesses to educate them on the new rules. We are confident they will be able to succeed and meet our expectations.”

To comply with the new rules, covered businesses can hire a private carter, self-transport, or process their food scraps onsite, as long as the material goes for beneficial use, such as for use as compost or in anaerobic digestion, a way of generating renewable energy. Businesses may also donate food that would otherwise be thrown away to a third-party charity or food bank, sell or

donate the food to a farmer for feedstock, or sell or donate meat by-products to a rendering company.

To allow time for education and outreach, the rules takes effect in August 2018 and will be enforced starting February 2019. The Department's outreach staff, along with other relevant agency partners, will work to educate and inform businesses of the new rules. This includes mailers, trainings and in-person visits before the rules are enforced.

The new rule is a result of Local Law 146 of 2013, which requires the Sanitation Commissioner to evaluate whether there is sufficient capacity at regional food waste processing facilities to require additional City food waste-generating businesses to separate it from their refuse for its beneficial use. The Department's most recent assessment found that substantial available capacity exists to handle material from the newly covered establishments.

Food scraps and other organic waste make up more than one-third of all commercial putrescible waste in the city. Some businesses are already putting their food waste to reuse, both voluntarily and via a previously established rule, which covered businesses such as arenas and stadiums with more than 15,000 seats, food manufacturers with 25,000 sq. ft. or more, food wholesalers with 20,000 sq. ft. or more, and food service establishments in hotels with 150 or more rooms. Those rules, which included about 300 businesses, became effective in January 2016, and were enforced starting in January 2017.

About the New York City Department of Sanitation

The Department of Sanitation (DSNY) promotes a healthy environment through the efficient management of solid waste and the development of environmentally sound long-range planning for handling refuse, including recyclables. The Department operates 59 district garages and manages a fleet of more than 2,000 rear-loading collection trucks, 450 mechanical brooms and 693 salt/sand spreaders. The Department clears litter, snow and ice from approximately 6,500 miles of City streets and removes debris from vacant lots as well as abandoned vehicles from City streets.