

Waste management industry: Business and government sectors, 2014

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The total amount of waste diverted to recycling or organic processing facilities increased by 7.0% compared with 2012 to 9.1 million tonnes in 2014.

Materials diverted from landfill from non-residential sources increased by 12.2%, while diversion of materials coming from households rose 2.8%. The large increase in diverted materials from non-residential sources was driven in part by a 21.7% gain in Alberta.

Nationally, Canadians diverted 255 kilograms of waste per person from landfills. Among the provinces, residents of Prince Edward Island diverted the most waste per capita, at 429 kilograms per person, followed by residents of British Columbia, who diverted 358 kilograms per person.

Electronic waste recycling continued to increase in popularity, totalling just over 83 000 tonnes in 2014, an 18.4% increase over 2012. Ferrous metals showed the next greatest increase, rising by 13.8% over 2012 to just under 525 000 tonnes.

Business characteristics

Canadian businesses in the waste management industry had total revenues of \$7.1 billion dollars in 2014, up from \$6.4 billion in 2012.

Local governments spent \$3.3 billion dollars on waste management in 2014. Expenditures on organic processing facilities increased by 8.5% from 2012 to \$92.3 million dollars in 2014.

Waste management activities in the public and private sectors provided full-time employment for almost 35,000 people across Canada in 2014.

Note to readers

This release is based on the results of the biennial Waste Management Industry Survey: Business and Government Sectors 2014.

This analysis examines the quantities of waste diverted from disposal through recycling and composting. Business characteristics, including financial and employment information of both private and public waste management establishments, are also included.





In celebration of the country's 150th birthday, Statistics Canada is presenting snapshots from our rich statistical history.

In 1996, Statistics Canada conducted its first cycle of the *Waste Management Industry Survey: Business and Government Sectors*. To this point, no national set of statistics had provided a complete profile of the production and handling of waste in

Canada.

In 1996, Canadians sent 20.6 million tonnes of waste for disposal in landfills or incinerators, and diverted approximately 6.0 million tonnes through recycling and reuse of materials. By comparison, in 2014 – almost 20 years later – 25.1 million tonnes of waste found its way to Canadian landfills and incinerators, while 9.1 million tonnes of waste were diverted from landfill.

The case for waste diversion in Canada

Recycling efforts in Canada are not just a late 20th century phenomenon. During wartime, scarcity of materials due to global supply-chain disruptions meant Canada had to take special measures in procuring feedstock for the manufacture of goods. Household items such as aluminum, tin, rubber, silk and nylon were all valuable commodities that could be recycled and used in the production of munitions and clothing for the war effort overseas.

Post World War II, a booming economy gave rise to a growing middle class and concomitant consumerism, which also meant more waste production. The rise of the plastics industry over the same period was partly responsible for a transformation to a more "disposable" society. The environmental movement of the 1970s contributed to slowly reversing this trend, raising awareness of the importance of conserving resources through the reduction, reuse and recycling of consumer products.

Through the latter years of the 20th century, waste diversion efforts expanded to include organic matter and electronic products, in an effort to reduce the amount of waste material sent to landfill, or incinerated, for disposal. Primary motivators for current recycling efforts include the economic benefits of recovering valuable metals for reintroduction in new products and reducing the amount of pollutants entering the environment.

Available in CANSIM: tables [153-0042](#) to [153-0045](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [1736](#) and [2009](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).