

Biennial Waste Management Survey: Waste Diversion, 2022

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Canadian households and businesses diverted almost 10 million tonnes of waste from landfills in 2022, unchanged compared with 2020. Instead of being buried, diverted material finds a second life through recycling or composting.

Provincially, Ontario (3.4 million tonnes) and Quebec (2.7 million tonnes) diverted the majority of all recycled and composted waste in 2022, while New Brunswick (+5%) saw one of the largest increases in waste diversion of all materials since 2020.

Plastic waste

Diverting plastic waste to avoid disposal has become a challenge because of the many different types of hard-to-recycle plastics being produced for consumption and entering the waste stream. A large majority of [plastic continues to be permanently disposed](#) of in landfills. Diversion efforts targeting plastic materials have begun through the Canada-wide Action Plan on Zero Plastic Waste to meet the target of zero plastic waste by 2030.

In terms of diversion, in 2022, almost 367 000 tonnes of plastic were sent to material recycling facilities (where recyclable materials are brought to be sorted and prepared for sale). Most (72%) of this plastic came from residential sources. Newfoundland and Labrador (+25%) reported one of the largest increases in the amount of diverted plastic material.

Organic waste growth

When accumulated in landfills, [organic waste emits large quantities of methane](#), a greenhouse gas over 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide. In 2022, organic waste diverted from landfills surpassed 3 million tonnes, down 3% compared with 2020. More than three-quarters (77%) of the waste material sent to composting facilities in 2022 came from residential sources.

Household composting habits

In 2021, [65% of Canadian households composted kitchen waste](#), mostly using curbside pick-up programs (79% of households composting kitchen waste) or backyard composting (27%). Similarly, 81% of households that had a lawn or garden composted yard waste either through curbside collection (77% of households composting yard waste) or through backyard composting (23%).

New for 2022: Food waste and leaf and yard waste

For the first time, the 2022 Waste Management Survey publishes the quantities of organic material composted by classifying them in a more detailed manner. Nationally, the majority (52%, or 1.6 million tonnes) of organic materials was reported as food waste, 37% (1.1 million tonnes) was leaf and yard waste, and 11% (350 000 tonnes) was other organic materials (such as agricultural, forestry and wood waste). These proportions varied substantially among the provinces.

In most provinces, diverted organic material was mainly food waste: this was the case in Nova Scotia (67%), Alberta (67%), Ontario (53%), Quebec (49%) and British Columbia (48%). Leaf and yard waste was a greater share of organic waste composted in Manitoba (70%) and Saskatchewan (44%).



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Note to readers

Starting with the 2023 cycle of the Waste Management Survey, collection and publication of diverted waste (recycled and composted) data will become annual.

The survey provides comprehensive information about waste disposed of in and diverted from landfills and its sources. This information is collected from businesses and municipalities that provide waste management services.

The Waste Management Survey data presented here account for material brought to sorting or processing facilities. As some of this material is deemed unrecyclable during sorting, not all of it ends up being recycled or composted.

Measurement of plastic diversion and disposal is also available through the [Physical Flow Account for Plastic Material \(PFAPM\)](#). The Waste Management Survey is one of multiple components of this account. The PFAPM considers the plastic content of internationally imported and exported products, as well as international imports and exports of sorted and baled plastic waste, disposed plastic waste and scrap. The Waste Management Survey accounts for plastics diverted from residential and non-residential sources and managed by municipalities or businesses specialized in waste management. It does not account for imported plastic waste and does not collect information on the types of material found in disposed waste.

Available tables: table [38-10-0138-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [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; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).