**History**
In 1995 the state of South Dakota enacted a plan to reduce the amount of wastes disposed of in landfills. As a part of this plan, yard waste may no longer be taken to a landfill for disposal. Instead of burying yard waste in landfills, composting has become an important way to recycle yard waste.

**Benefits of Composting**
Composting yard waste reduces the amount of wastes disposed in landfills and produces a useful product.
- Composting yard waste reduces disposal costs in landfills.
- Finished compost can be used as a low cost landscaping material.
- Incorporating compost into soil adds nutrients and organic matter and improves water retention of the soil.

**How Compost Happens**
With the help of many microorganisms, a little water and a little air, yard waste turns into good, useful compost.

**Designing Your Compost Area**
- Design your compost area so that it is easy to manage.
- Place your compost area in a location that will not offend neighbors.
- Place yard waste in piles or windrows.
- Construct berms around your compost area to control run-on and runoff.
**Operating Your Compost Facility**
- Remove plastic from the compost piles or windrows.
- Keep piles or windrows at sizes your equipment can manage.
- Turn piles or windrows at least once a month to prevent foul odors and speed up the composting process.
- Add water if the piles or windrows are very dry.
- Allow the piles or windrows to heat up.
- Keep finished compost separate from new compost piles or windrows.
- Find an end use for finished compost.

**Uses of Finished Compost**
- Landscaping – compost can be used as an alternative to more expensive topsoil.
- Mulching – placing compost around the base of plants and trees helps them retain water and provides nutrients.
- Erosion control – spreading compost over steep slopes promotes fast vegetation cover and is more resistant to water erosion than topsoil alone.
- Remediation – compost can be used to cover closed solid waste disposal areas or other disturbed land.

**Please Note:** Compost distributed to the public must be registered with the Department of Agriculture at (605) 773-3724.

If you have any questions about the composting process, state regulations, or solid waste disposal, please contact:
South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Waste Management Program
Joe Foss Building
523 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501-3181
Phone: (605) 773-3153
Fax: (605) 773-6035