

## Cornell Waste Management Institute

Department of Crop & Soil Sciences • 101 Rice Hall • Ithaca, NY 14853-5601

### Compost Sampling - Preparation

#### Before you take your samples...

Locate the nearest UPS drop-off point. This will be important because shipping your compost samples quickly ensures accurate and timely results.

*To find a location near you:*

Call **1-800-742-5877**

Or visit <http://www.ups.com/using/services/locate/locate.html>

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Hours of Operation: \_\_\_\_\_ AM to \_\_\_\_\_ PM

Phone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Call the UPS location you have chosen and make sure they accept pre-paid shipping.

When you call the UPS location, find out what time packages must be delivered by for next-day delivery.

Packages must arrive at the UPS facility by \_\_\_\_\_ AM/PM.

Make an ice pack for **each sample** being sent. You can do this by filling small plastic soda bottles three quarters full of water and then freezing them.

Find a shipping box that is either insulated or made of heavy cardboard. This is important because a heavier material will preserve your compost sample during shipping better than a lighter material.

Plan to mail your samples on a Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday, and take note of holidays.

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## Compost Sampling - Well Mixed Windrows

### To take your samples...

Review the sample collection diagram included in this packet.

Remember to always use clean gloves, tools, and equipment when taking samples.

Sampling and turning equipment is often a source of cross- contamination and may cause significant changes to occur in results.

Turn the pile you will be sampling within 4 hours of collection time.

Take **8** grab samples from each side of the pile and place them in a *clean* bucket, digging as far into the center of the pile as you can for each one. Mix well.

Be careful not to take samples where the pile has been disturbed. *If you have to climb on the pile to get grabs from the top, make sure you take the bottom grabs first.*

For each sample, fill a 1 gallon bag as shown in the sampling diagram. Press the bag to remove excess air from the bag if necessary, making sure it is tightly closed.

Double bag each sample.

Place your samples in the insulated or heavy cardboard box along with 1 ice pack or frozen water bottle for each sample.

Before shipping, complete the **chain of custody** form included in this packet.

Fill out the highlighted areas including Collector (you), Location (your operation), Sample Identification (Sample #), and Relinquished By (your signature with the date and time). Place this sheet inside the box away from the ice packs to keep the ink from running.

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## Compost Sampling - Poorly Mixed Windrows

### To take your samples...

Review the sample collection diagram included in this packet.

Remember to always use clean gloves, tools, and equipment when taking samples.

Sampling and turning equipment is often a source of cross- contamination and may cause significant changes to occur in results.

Cut a cross-section of the pile being sampled with a loader.

Take **5** grab samples from each side-wall of your cut. Repeat this procedure three to five more times at different spots along the side-walls. Place them in a *clean* bucket. Mix well.

Be careful not to take samples where the pile has been disturbed. *If you have to climb on the pile to get grabs from the top, make sure you take the bottom grabs first.*

For each sample, fill a 1 gallon bag as shown in the sampling diagram. Press the bag to remove excess air from the bag if necessary, making sure it is tightly closed.

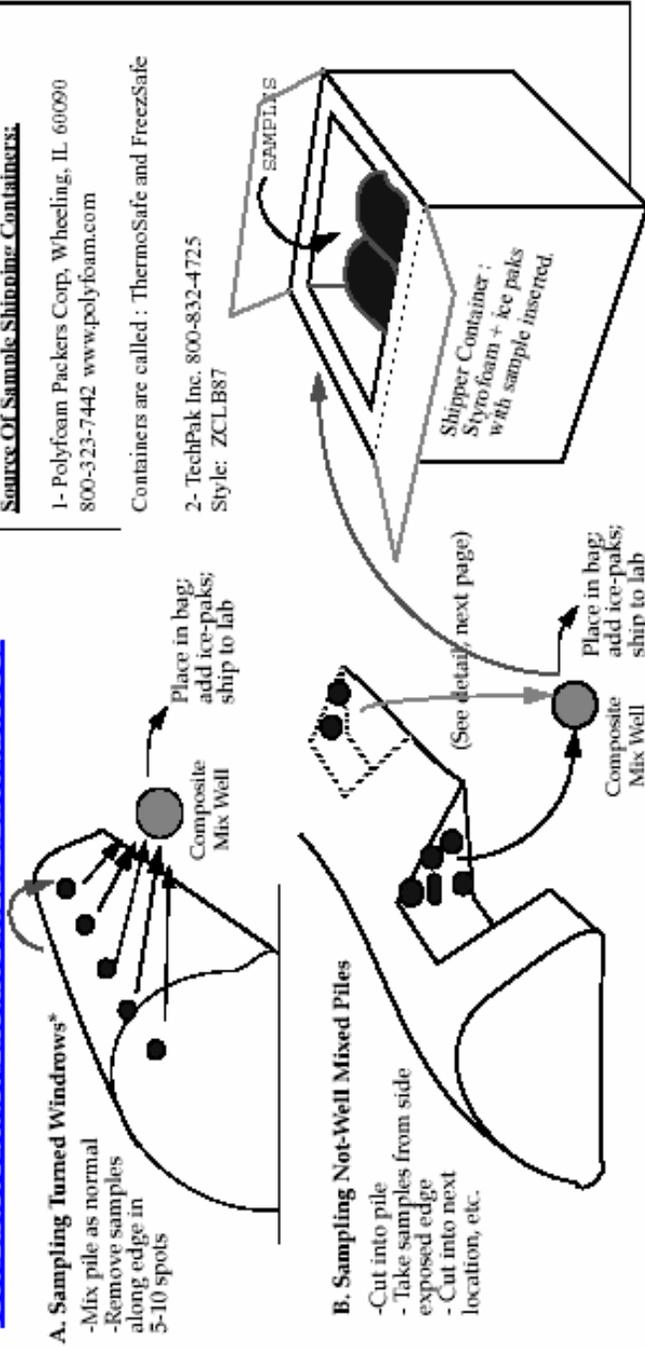
Double bag each sample.

Place your samples in the insulated or heavy cardboard box along with 1 ice pack or frozen water bottle for each sample.

Before shipping, complete the **chain of custody** form included in this packet.

Fill out the highlighted areas including Collector (you), Location (your operation), Sample Identification (Sample #), and Relinquished By (your signature with the date and time). Place this sheet inside the box away from the ice packs to keep the ink from running.

**THE MATERIAL SAMPLING SCHEMATIC**



**Source Of Sample Shipping Containers:**

1- Polyfoam Packers Corp, Wheeling, IL 60090  
 800-323-7442 www.polyfoam.com

Containers are called : ThermoSafe and FreezSafe

2- TechPak Inc. 800-832-4725  
 Style: ZCLB87

**A. Well Mixed Piles\*** (turned within 4 hours): Take 5 sub-samples each from each side of pile; mix-well in bucket and remove 1-gallon and ship to lab in cardboard/styrofoam containers with ice-paks.

**B. Not Well-Mixed piles:** Cut cross-section with loader; take 5-sub-samples each from side-wall of cut; repeat operation at 3-5 other locations; remove 1-gallon and ship to lab with ice-paks.

\* Note - for sealed piles such as Ag-Bag or Gore-Tek, material must be sampled as in Figure A. Double the number of sub-samples to make a composite if no mixing has been done.



**SEND SAMPLE NEXT-DAY COURIER TO:**

Woods End Research Laboratory  
 20 Old Rome Road  
 Mt Vernon ME 04352 USA