

How the segregation habit helps reduce household waste and the size of landfills

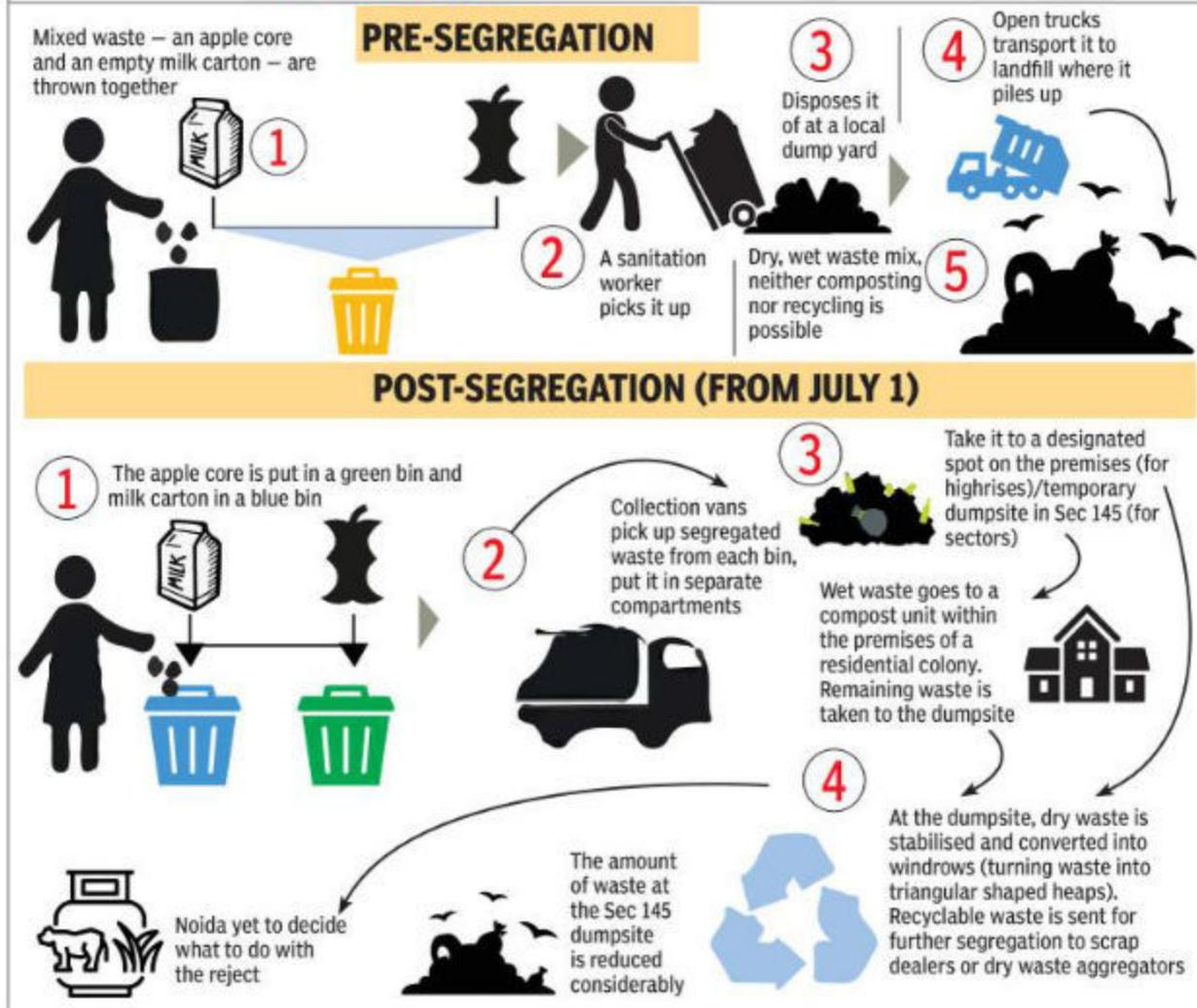
TNN | Jun 28, 2019, 07:39 AM IST



NOIDA: Waste segregation won't just reduce the total amount of waste that goes to landfills, it can also cut down on how much your household ultimately generates.

For starters, kitchen waste like potato peels, cucumber skin, carrot crumbs, etc need not go into the waste basket at all — they can just be put in container pots and re-sued as fertilizers.

YOU NEED A RECYCLE BIN. AND NOT ALL TRASH GOES THERE



“By taking care of biodegradable waste ourselves, we can roughly reduce 50-60% of household waste. The remaining can be handed over to the waste collector,” says Swati Singh Sambyal, programme manager for environmental governance (waste management) at the Centre for Science and Environment.

Another little homework to get the household waste management process right is to identify what goes into the dry waste bin (blue) and what goes into the wet waste bin (green). This will get you prepared for July 1 when Noida

rolls out its 'segregate-at-source' programme that will see pickup vans collect segregated waste from households in 20 sectors and societies.

Experts also suggest a red bin for domestic hazardous waste such as batteries, nail paints, pesticide/insecticide containers, paint drums, needles, syringes, expired medicines or chemicals, etc, and a fourth for sanitary waste and diapers. But for now, two — green and blue — will do.

The segregation rules are the same for bungalows and housing societies, though the collection and treatment process vary slightly. Housing societies are bulk waste generators according to the solid waste management rules (SWM) 2016, and will need to compost wet waste at source. In a large society that has space, an agency can be engaged for composting in a pit dug within the premises and also by employing machines. If there is no space, a neighbouring green belt could be used. "Out of the 200 apartment complexes in the district, 15 have attained almost 100 % waste segregation while 46 are in a semi-prepared state or preparing," says Rajiva Singh, president of Noida Federation of Apartment Owners Association (NOFAA).

But there are challenges. "Societies built 15 years back didn't plan for in-house composting facilities," says Singh. Besides, the need for children's play areas and parking spaces means societies have a space crunch. "Noida Authority needs to come up with the concept of clusters where societies can jointly incur the operational cost for waste segregation and machinery and the authority can provide infrastructure and land," suggests Singh.

Sambyal maintains more de-centralised methods should be explored. "Waste to energy (WTE) plants are a failed concept. Decentralised waste management is essential and segregation should be ensured," says Sambyal, adding NCR should not repeat the mistake of setting up another plant like the one at Okhla. "Waste in India is mostly organic, since we don't consume as much packaged food as the west. This makes a WTE plant futile here," says Sambyal.

The impact of a landfill site, she adds will be evident in the next 5-10 years in Noida when groundwater becomes contaminated. “A landfill site should be as far away from habitation as possible because even at a well-planned site, there is always some leakage that will affect groundwater in some years, if not immediately,” says Sambyal.

Noida certainly does not want the Mubarakpur landfill to turn into a second Ghazipur dumpsite. It also wants to do away with all ‘dhalaos’ (roadside vats) that are both a health hazard and an eyesore.

The places where the segregation programme will start from on July 1 are Vivek Vihar (Sector 82), sectors 19, 21, 25, 27, 30, 44, 47, 48, 52, 56, 71 B block, 104 and 135, Janta Shiv Shakti Apartments (Sector 71), Silver City (Sector 93), Green View Apartments (Sector 99), Best View Apartment (Sector 99), Dhawalgiri Apartments (Sector 11) and Homes Apartments (Sector 121).

The Noida Authority has empanelled six agencies for RWAs to sign up for composting of wet waste.