

Glossary of Abbreviations and Definitions

The first time that a term or abbreviation defined in the glossary appears in the text, it is printed in bold.

TERM	DEFINITION
1989/1990 WCS	The waste characterization study conducted by the New York City Department of Sanitation in 1989 and 1990.
Absolute Variability	The variability from sampling unit to sampling unit, which is measured by the Standard Deviation.
Borough	The five political/geographic areas of New York City: Manhattan, Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island.
Bulk Item	As defined for the NYC WCS, any item of waste that will not fit into a 96-gallon container.
BWPRR	Bureau of Waste Prevention, Reuse and Recycling
C&D	An abbreviation of construction and demolition debris, a material group in the NYC WCS.
Capture Rate	The amount of materials set out for residential recycling collection as a percentage of designated recyclable materials in both recycling and refuse streams. This ratio measures how much of the targeted materials are actually being recycled, which is a measure of how successfully such materials are recycled.
Census Tracts	Census tracts are small, relatively permanent statistical subdivisions of a county. New York City includes 2,217 census tracts containing on average about 4,000 inhabitants.
City	New York City
Confidence Interval	A range within which the true Mean of the population is believed to lie with the given confidence level.
Confidence Level	The certainty with which the true Mean lies within the interval determined. For the NYC WCS, a 90 percent confidence level is used. A 90 percent confidence level is the industry standard for Waste Characterization Studies. Note that the use of a 90 percent level instead of a 95 percent level (the standard for scientific research) does not (a) affect the calculation of means, only the width of intervals around the means or (b) preclude the application of a 95 percent confidence level to results if such an analysis is of interest.
Contamination Rate	The percentage of material that is found in the containers set out for residential recycling collection that is not accepted in New York City's curbside recycling program.

Glossary of Abbreviations and Definitions

(continued)

The first time that a term or abbreviation defined in the glossary appears in the text, it is printed in bold.

TERM	DEFINITION
Correlation, negative	A statistical measure referring to the relationship between two or more variables suggesting a causal relationship between these variables. A negative correlation occurs when one variable increases and the other variable decreases.
Correlation, positive	A statistical measure referring to the relationship between two or more variables suggesting a causal relationship between these variables. A positive correlation occurs when one variable increases and the other variable also increases.
Count	The process of counting the individual items that were subsorted.
Curbside Collection	The collection of residential refuse or recycling in bins or bags set out in proximity to residences that generate these types of waste. DSNY provides curbside refuse collection to all residents two or three times per week and recycling curbside collection once per week.
Density/Income Strata	Divisions of New York City's population based on median housing density and median household income.
Deposit (containers)	Beverage containers for which, under the New York State Redeemable Container Law, the purchaser is required to pay a deposit. The deposit may be redeemed when the empty containers are returned to a retailer or authorized redemption center.
District	The 59 areas within New York City used by the Department of Sanitation to administer the City's waste management program. These districts are co-terminus, or identical, to the 59 Community Districts.
Diversion Rate	The amount of materials set out for recycling collection as a percentage of the total residential waste collected.
DSNY	Department of Sanitation of New York City
Dual-bin Trucks	DSNY collection trucks with two compartments used for the simultaneous collection of curbside residential Paper and MGP.
Durable	An item of residential waste that is not putrescible, packaging, or unfinished material, but is a durable object, such as an appliance, piece of furniture, or other household item.

Glossary of Abbreviations and Definitions

(continued)

The first time that a term or abbreviation defined in the glossary appears in the text, it is printed in bold.

TERM	DEFINITION
Film (Plastic)	A category of flexible plastic materials used for packaging, trash bags and other applications, typically made of polyethylene or polypropylene.
HDPE	An abbreviation for high density polyethylene; a plastic denoted by a #2 inside the chasing arrows recycling symbol.
HHW	An abbreviation for Household Hazardous Waste, one of the material groups in the NYC WCS.
H/H	An abbreviation for the high housing density and high income stratum.
H/L	An abbreviation for the high housing density and low income stratum.
H/M	An abbreviation for the high housing density and medium income stratum.
Illegally Disposed Street Basket Waste	Residential or commercial waste that is illegally disposed of in street baskets (e.g. home-use products, such as large detergent bottles, cereal boxes, or personal mail; construction materials, etc.).
L/H	An abbreviation for the low housing density and high income stratum.
L/M	An abbreviation for the low housing density and medium income stratum.
Late Week/Early Week	A criterion used in the PWCS based on the idea that the composition of the waste discarded during the latter part of a week differs significantly from the composition of waste discarded during the early part of a week.
LDPE	An abbreviation for low density polyethylene, a plastic denoted by #4 inside the “chasing arrows” recycling symbol.
Lower Boundary	For a given material, the lowest average percentage of that material expected in the population consistent with the sample, at the confidence level specified.
M/H	An abbreviation for the medium housing density and high income stratum.
M/L	An abbreviation for the medium housing density and low income stratum.

Glossary of Abbreviations and Definitions

(continued)

The first time that a term or abbreviation defined in the glossary appears in the text, it is printed in bold.

TERM	DEFINITION
M/M	An abbreviation for the medium housing density and medium income stratum.
Material Categories	The classification of all materials in the waste stream into categories for sorting, weighing, and counting purposes. In the NYC WCS, 91 Material Categories were used to characterize the City's waste stream.
Material Groups	Groupings of material categories used to simplify or generalize results. The Material Groups used in the NYC WCS are: Paper, Plastic, Glass, Metal, Organics, Appliances/Electronics, Construction and Demolition Debris, Miscellaneous Inorganics, and Household Hazardous Waste.
Mean	The sum of the values of all observations divided by the number of observations, also known as average. In analyzing the composition of samples of waste, refuse, recycling, and the contents of street baskets, the best estimate of the true percentage of each material in the population is the Mean percentage of that material from all of the samples.
MGP	An abbreviation for Metal, Glass, and Plastic. One of the two streams of recycling collected by the DSNY consisting of plastic bottles and jugs; glass bottles and jars; metal cans and household objects; aluminum foil, trays and cans, and gable top beverage cartons. The other stream of recycling collected by DSNY is Paper.
Mixed Cullet	Broken glass in small pieces (under 3" x 3") of mixed color.
Moisture and Particulate Test	A laboratory test that determines the amount of moisture in a sample of material and determines the amount of fugitive or foreign material adhering to the sample.
Multiserve (containers)	Beverage containers with a capacity of more than 24 ounces of liquid.
Multi-Unit Apartment Study or Multi-Unit Study (MUS)	The component of the 2004/2005 waste characterization study that examined the correlation between the physical and operational characteristics of multi-unit buildings (those buildings with 6 or more residential units) and recycling success.
Non-deposit (containers)	Beverage containers which are not designated as deposit containers under the New York State Redeemable Container Law.

Glossary of Abbreviations and Definitions

(continued)

The first time that a term or abbreviation defined in the glossary appears in the text, it is printed in bold.

TERM	DEFINITION
NYC	New York City
NYC WCS	New York City Waste Characterization Study
Observation	The value(s) associated with a given sampling unit.
OCC	An abbreviation for old corrugated cardboard, one of the material categories in the PWCS and the NYC WCS.
ONP	An abbreviation for old newspaper, one of the material categories in the PWCS and the NYC WCS.
Paper	The second of two streams of recyclable materials collected by DSNY consisting of newspapers; magazines; catalogues; junk mail; white office paper; mixed paper; and gray and corrugated cardboard/paperboard. The other stream of is Metals/Glass/Plastic (MGP).
PET	An abbreviation for polyethylene terephthalate, a plastic denoted by #1 inside the “chasing arrows” recycling symbol.
Population (Statistics)	The entire aggregation of items from which a sample can be drawn. In the NYC WCS, the population was all of the residential waste collected at the curb by DSNY.
PP	An abbreviation for polyethylene propylene, a plastic denoted by #5 inside the “chasing arrows” recycling symbol.
Potential Deposit	Beverage containers which are not currently designated as deposit containers under the New York State Redeemable Container Law, but which may be designated in future legislation.
PS	An abbreviation for polystyrene, a plastic denoted by #6 inside the “chasing arrows” recycling symbol.
Pure Routes	DSNY Refuse and Recycling collection routes that include only residences from a single housing density and income stratum.
PWCS	The preliminary waste characterization study conducted by the New York City Department of Sanitation in 2004.
PVC	An abbreviation for polyvinyl chloride, a plastic denoted by #3 inside the “chasing arrows” recycling symbol.

Glossary of Abbreviations and Definitions

(continued)

The first time that a term or abbreviation defined in the glossary appears in the text, it is printed in bold.

TERM	DEFINITION
Recycling	The act of recovering items or materials that might have been discarded and, usually after processing, returning them to the stream of commerce. Also, the materials that are set out for recycling collection.
Recycling Subindicators	A set of abbreviations used to indicate; i) those materials designated for recycling under New York City’s current curbside recycling program during the study period (“R”); ii) those materials for which markets exist and which could be added to a future New York City curbside program (“PR”); and iii) those materials that are not designated for recycling under New York City’s curbside recycling program because established or emerging markets do not presently exist (“NR”).
Refuse	Items or materials that are discarded and disposed.
Relative Variability	The variability from Sampling Unit to Sampling Unit in relation to the Mean. This is calculated by dividing the Standard Deviation by the Mean.
Residential Study	The component of the 2004/2005 waste characterization study that addressed the generation and composition of the curbside residential waste.
Sample	A portion of a population used to estimate the composition of the population as a whole. The Sample is made up of multiple Sampling Units.
Sample Acquisition, or Sampling	The procedure for selecting Sampling Units from the population.
Sample Number	The number of sampling units in a sample.
Sample Weight	The weight of a sampling unit. In the WCS, each refuse sampling unit was between 200 and 300 pounds.
Sampling Unit	A single elementary unit used as the basis for estimating the composition of the population.
Section	Each of the City’s 59 Sanitation Districts is divided into 3 to 5 Sanitation District Sections within which routes are designed and tonnage data collected daily.
Single-serve (containers)	Beverage containers with a capacity of less than 24 ounces of liquid.

Glossary of Abbreviations and Definitions

(continued)

The first time that a term or abbreviation defined in the glossary appears in the text, it is printed in bold.

TERM	DEFINITION
Sorting	The procedure for separating a heterogeneous amount of material, such as a 200 pound Sampling Units of refuse, into its constituent material categories.
Sorting Period	The days or weeks when the sampling and sorting of waste took place during the NYC WCS.
Standard Deviation	A measure of the dispersion or variability around the Mean of the weights of a group of Sampling Units of New York City waste.
Street Basket Waste Study	The component of the 2004/2005 waste characterization study that addressed the composition of the street basket waste.
Subsorts	The process of sorting a particular material into smaller constituent components (e.g. drinking containers were subsorted into deposit and non-deposit containers).
Upper Boundary	For a given material, the highest average percentage of that material expected in a population consistent with the sample, at the confidence level specified.
Waste	The combination of Refuse and Recycling
Waste Generation	The rate at which waste is set out for collection, typically reported in terms of amounts per generator per time period (e.g. pounds per capita per week).
WCS	The waste characterization study conducted over four seasons by the New York City Department of Sanitation in 2004 and 2005.