Reducing Waste Disposal at Rural Transfer Stations and Getting the Message Out

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North Country Council
Littleton, NH

What is NEWMOA?

Northeast Waste Management Officials’ Association
- Non-profit, non-partisan interstate association
- Solid waste, hazardous waste, waste site cleanup, & pollution prevention programs
- CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, RI, & VT
- Formally recognized by EPA in 1986
- www.newmoa.org

Leading the Northeast to a Sustainable, Waste-Free Future
Improving Safety & Reducing Waste at Rural Transfer Stations

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Project Partners

New Hampshire
- North Country Council (NCC)
- Department of Environmental Services

Vermont
- Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District (NEKWMD)
- Department of Environmental Conservation
Project Outline

- Consumer Handouts:
  - Reducing Your Waste
  - The Benefits of Reuse...
  - WHY Recycle...
  - Recycle Right!
  - Don’t Trash That!

- Accompanying Posters
- Local Workshops
- Outreach Webinars
- Project Website:

Today’s Workshop

- Short Introduction
  - Jennifer Griffith, NEWMOA
- Quick “before” survey
- Reducing Waste Disposal
  - Jennifer Griffith, NEWMOA
- Quick “after” survey
- Break (refreshments)
- Transfer Station Brochure Template
  - Regan Pride, NCC
Reducing Waste Disposal

The 3 R’s = Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Photo Source: EPA
**Today’s Objectives**

**Offer Strategies to Communicate on**

- **Recycling** for people who don’t recycle (or don’t recycle much)
- **Reusing & Reducing** for supporters of recycling (and everyone else too!)

**Definitions**

- **Reduce** – Cutting back on the amount of items we purchase, use, & dispose of
- **Reuse** – Finding a new way to use the item; it is kept whole & may be sold or donated for use again
- **Recycle** – Using all or part of the item, separated into its individual components so that it can be used to create new products
Focus on positive messaging

- More recycling = less trash = saves $
- Saves money on landfill disposal & transport to the landfill
  - Lowers town expenses; helps keep taxes from increasing
- Conserves natural resources, energy, & raw materials
- Returns products & materials back into the economy & creates jobs
General Communication Tips

Make sure that recycling program is as convenient & easy to understand as possible:

- Label drop-off areas clearly
- Publicize program
  - Outreach materials (use Regan’s template!)
  - Regular communication with residents

General Communication Tips

- Actions are easy to understand
  - Drop-off areas are clearly labeled
  - Examples of labeled & segregated collection signage
Regular communications with public

- Distribute educational materials once a year
  - Increases understanding about what is & is not accepted
  - Reduces contamination
- Send material to new residents when they move in
- If town has transfer station sticker program – distribute material when get new sticker
- Make sure to publicize program changes before & after they happen

Tailor your messaging to these two separate audiences/constituents

- People that already recycle
- People that do not recycle
Thank them for doing a good job
Even the best recyclers can make mistakes
Focus on what to recycle & where
  Provide clear instructions
  “Dos & Don’ts” can help
    ▪ Message: when things that can’t be recycled are added or recyclables are put in the wrong place, a worker needs to remove them, which requires labor & can be dangerous

When recycling is done right, the town generates materials that producers want to buy
Generates revenue & keeps recycling viable
Non-Recyclers

Discussion Questions
- Do people throw away things that could easily be recycled at your facility?
  - What types of recyclables do you see thrown away?
  - Have you talked to them about recycling?
  - If so, what’s their response?
- Are there people who only bring trash & no recycling?
  - Have you asked them why they don’t recycle?
  - What other arguments do they make?
  - What works?

Communication Tips: Non-Recyclers

Non-recyclers
- Tend to not believe the benefits of recycling outweigh the effort to do it
- Don’t always listen to “authority” working at the transfer station
  - Hearing from a different voice can be influential
- Tend not to respond to facts about the benefits of recycling
  - Need to focus on the direct impact to them and their community
Communication Tips: Non-Recyclers

Ask for town support for the message that recycling is a priority:

- Ask elected officials to visibly demonstrate support for recycling, including:
  - Asking religious leaders, community groups, & local businesses to help get the message out
  - Provide funding for outreach materials & actions
    • Promote recycling on municipal trucks & other town vehicles – serves as a reminder that recycling is available

- Highlight “top notch” recyclers in the local newspaper, website, or newsletter (individual &/or community group)

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Communication Tips: Non-Recyclers

Emphasize Cost Savings - Anything that is put in the trash that could be recycled wastes $$

- Directly from their wallet due if town has PAYT
- Indirectly through town expenses:
  - Recycling lowers town’s disposal costs & can help keep taxes from increasing
    • Disposal costs are accrued by weight so more trash (& heavier trash) costs more
    • Transporting to disposal is costly – the greater the volume of trash, the more often it needs to be transported
Communications Message

It’s Not That Hard to Do

- Find a corner of kitchen area, covered porch or garage for recyclables collection
- Use a cardboard box or plastic tub to collect metal, glass, & plastic containers
  - Rinse before to keep area clean
- Use smaller boxes/tubs or paper bags for paper
- Easy to put in car
- Clear instructions & friendly people in recycling center
  - May get good stuff free from the swap area

Communications Message

They’re probably already doing some recycling – give positive feedback

- Most transfer stations have containers for scrap metal recycling
- Free to drop-off

Photo: Dalton Transfer Station
Contribute to the Community
- Good to not be wasteful & to conserve resources
- Help the town save money
- Return products & materials back into the economy & create jobs

May be Mandatory
- Some towns have ordinances that require recycling

Template version that anyone can customize for their local area:
www.newmoa.org/solidwaste/projects/transferstations/publications.cfm
Other Recycling Resources

- RE3.org Campaign: [http://www.re3.org](http://www.re3.org)
  - Some eye-catching posters on benefits of recycling
  - Source: NC Division of Environmental Assistance

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**Why Recycle?**

- Making products from recovered materials...
- Saves energy...

Check out: [www.re3.org](http://www.re3.org)

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Reduce

Reuse

Recycle
Communicating About Reuse

- Do people throw away things that are in good shape & could be reused?
  - What types of good stuff do you see thrown away?

- What reuse options are there?
  - Do you have a reuse area at your facility?
  - Do you know of charitable options?
  - Do you have a way to share options with residents?

Communications Message

Benefits:

- Saves money on landfill disposal & transport to the landfill
- Conserves natural resources, energy, & raw materials
- Returns products & materials back into the economy & helps create jobs
- Helps people in the community who need these items but cannot afford to buy them new
Challenge: Space Limitations

Reuse at the transfer station
- Need a covered or sheltered location
- Need to manage items that are not picked up
- Often limited to smaller items

Communication Challenges

Staff limitations:
- The transfer station attendant is often helping someone else
- The resident dumps their item & doesn’t realize there are other options so will do it again

Convenience:
- The resident has already packed up the item & driven to the transfer station
  - Might have ruined it to get in the vehicle!
- Even if made aware of other options (donation centers) – they may be unwilling to take the item there (or back home)
Communications Strategy

- Need to educate residents **before** they bring reusable items to the transfer station
  - What types of items are appropriate for reuse
  - Avoid damage during transport (&/or storage)
  - Identify easiest reuse options

- Post information at transfer station &/or have a handout available

Communications – Reuse

**Donate**
- Charitable organizations:
  - Pemi-Valley Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Plymouth
  - Littleton FreeCycle Group (online)

**Sell**
- Consignment shops
- Online resources:
  - Northern NH, VT, & ME Swap N Trade Facebook Group
  - Northern NH Buying & Selling Facebook Group
  - NH Craig’s List
Donate through charitable organizations:
✓ Salvation Army
✓ Goodwill
✓ Habitat for Humanity ReStores
✓ Often located in the larger “shopping” community

Sell at consignment shops or online:
✓ FreeCycle
✓ Local Facebook groups
✓ Local Craigslist

Provide Information on Reuse Opportunities
• Post signs & notices with information on local reuse options & donation centers
• Partner with local groups or businesses
• Distribute the information to people early & often
Communications Strategy

**Handout**
- Include in regular town mailings, such as tax bills, utility bills, & other communications
- Distribute at HHW collections & other community events
- Post on local community bulletin boards
- Post on town’s website, Facebook page, & other social media platforms
- Send the information out to people regularly

Includes local options on back
Template version available

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Other Reuse Ideas

**Repurposing & Repair of Items**
- Partner with local boy/girl scout troops, veterans organizations, or small businesses to host a “fix-it clinic” or “repair cafe”
- Encourage people to explore Do-It-Yourself (DIY) tutorials online

Photo Source: Pinterest
Promote swapping of larger items at the transfer station
- Need a covered or sheltered location
- Or host a one-day event in the summer

Photos: Various Swap Shops at Transfer Stations in Massachusetts

Community One-day Swap Event
- Need to manage items that are not picked-up
  - Coordinate with community organizations to take high quality items for donation
  - Recycle items, if feasible & dispose of the rest

Recycling Rally in Northampton, Massachusetts
Do you see the same people throwing out a large amount of trash each week?

What are they throwing away a lot of?

- Take-out containers
- Food waste
- One-time disposables, such as napkins/paper towels/paper plates/plastic ware
- Small trinkets & other cheap plastic items
- Furniture & other large items

Have you ever talked to them about it?
Communications Message

Reducing Purchasing = Reducing Waste

Focus on direct benefits:
- Saves $$$
  - By buying less & buying carefully
- Reduces clutter - home & yard
- Reduces waste that needs managing
  - Direct savings if community has PAYT
  - Lowers town’s waste transport & disposal costs

Communications Message

“Consider before buying” concept:
- Think about whether they really need the item
- Can they borrow it from someone or buy it second-hand?
- Is it well-made & fixable so it can be given to someone else when they are done with it?
- Can it be recycled if it’s not reusable? If not, it will be trash
- Is it made with recycled content?
  - Helps close the loop & boost market demand for materials the transfer station collects for recycling
Benefits

- Conserves natural resources, energy, & raw materials
- Best way to prevent pollution & waste & save $$ is to not purchase to begin with or purchase reusable items instead of disposables
- Recycling is better than disposal, but still uses resources to collect & move items; reduction avoids those impacts

Shop at yard sales & secondhand stores

- Avoid using single-use disposable items
  - Drink cups & food take-out containers
    - Bring reusable containers to manage leftovers
    - Use containers that can be recycled at the recycling center
  - Use washable cloth versions of paper napkins, towels, & tissues
  - Pack lunch in reusable bags & containers
  - Use washable plates/cups/silverware at parties & buy them second-hand
The Problem with Food Waste

- Food scraps make up 1/3 of total waste generated by a typical family in VT
- Heavy & expensive to dispose of
Communications Message

Reduce food waste
- Eat leftovers before they go bad
- Plan meals prior to shopping (saves $$ too)
- Check out these resources:
  - [https://cswd.net/reduce-and-reuse/reducing-food-waste/](https://cswd.net/reduce-and-reuse/reducing-food-waste/)
  - [www.epa.gov/recycle/reducing-wasted-food-home](www.epa.gov/recycle/reducing-wasted-food-home)

Donate appropriately

Photo Source: VT DEC

Communications Message

Easy to compost at home
- Contains valuable nutrients for gardens/farms
- Avoids transporting & reduces “yuck” factor
- Check out NH DES “how to” flyer

Other resources:
- [http://nekwmd.org/organics.html](http://nekwmd.org/organics.html)
- [https://nerc.org/documents/Organics/Reduce%20Wasted%20Food%20Tip%20Sheet%20for%20Residents_Final.pdf](https://nerc.org/documents/Organics/Reduce%20Wasted%20Food%20Tip%20Sheet%20for%20Residents_Final.pdf)
Many transfer stations are collecting for composting
- Mandatory in Vermont
- Use sawdust after depositing – controls vector problems
- Work with local farm to manage containers

Photo: Sheffield-Wheelock Transfer Station in Vermont

Summary
Reduce Waste

- Reducing Purchasing = Reducing Waste
  - Saves $$$ & reduces clutter
- Encourage people to “think before they buy”
  - Buy less
  - Borrow or buy secondhand (helps keep reuse viable)
  - Purchase quality items that are durable & repairable
  - Buy recycled (helps keep recycling viable)
- Encourage small daily changes
  - Purchase reusable items rather than disposables
  - See handouts for other ideas

Reuse

- Proactive outreach needed
  - Signs & handouts
- Promote existing donation options
  - Helps people in the community who need these items but cannot afford to buy them new
- Promote reuse/refurbish/repurpose ideas
- Support swapping to greatest extent feasible
- If really motivated, help organize:
  - One-day reuse swap event
  - Fix-it clinic
**Recycle**
- Needs to be easy to understand
  - Clear signage & instructions at facility
  - Regular communication on program
- Messages:
  - Recycling saves $$$
    - Directly if town has PAYT
    - Reduced waste transport & disposal costs to town
  - Recycling isn’t hard to do
- Encourage people to buy recycled
  - Helps keep recycling program viable

**Dispose**
- Ultimately, some things need to go in the trash
- Provide information on proper disposal of items that should not go in the trash
- Items banned from disposal in NH
  - Wet cell batteries; mercury products; electronics; leaf & yard waste; C&D waste (landfill disposal)
New Handout

Template version available
www.newmoa.org/solidwaste/projects/transferstations/publications.cfm

Other NEWMOA Resources
Focused on rural areas:
- Pay-as-you-throw
- Bulky waste
  - Mattresses
  - Furniture
  - Carpet
  - Large Rigid Plastics
- Waste Paint

All publications have template versions you can use: [www.newmoa.org/solidwaste/projects](http://www.newmoa.org/solidwaste/projects)

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**PAYT Resources**

[www.newmoa.org/solidwaste/projects/smart](http://www.newmoa.org/solidwaste/projects/smart)
- Case studies of 11 rural communities – some with before/after cost data
- Handout for the public to generate interest in PAYT
- “Fair Pricing Strategies” brochure for “decision-makers” with case studies
- SMART Toolkit for Rural Communities – website compilation of resources
Bulky Waste Resources

4 brochures with detail: furniture, mattresses, carpet, & large rigid plastics
Handout for the public with local information

Waste Paint Resources

Brochure with detail & case studies
Handout for the public with local information
Questions?

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Getting the Message Out… Effectively
Prepared by North Country Council
September 2017
Your flyer is the **first impression** you get to make with the public.

**The Good**
The Bad

The Ugly

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<td>OFF ROAD EQUIPMENT TIRES</td>
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MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE BAGS

| LARGE  | $25.00 PER PACKAGE OF TEN |
| SMALL  | $12.50 PER PACKAGE OF TEN  |
Key Elements

- Name of Town
- Facility Address
- Phone number
- Hours open to the public
- Who can use the facility
- Recycling rules (if any)
- Prices
- Unacceptable materials

Templates

1. General
2. Full sort facility
3. Zero-sort facility
How to Use Them

1. Format: MS Word
2. We (NCC) can fill it in for you
3. You can do it yourself
4. Have your secretary do it!