Reducing Waste Disposal at Rural Transfer Stations

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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

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

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

Focus on strategies for transfer station workers to communicate with residents

- Overview of transfer stations & recycling centers in NCC & NEKWMD
- Promoting Recycling
- Promoting Reuse
- Promoting Reduce
- Summary of workshops & survey results
- Q&A
Overview

Transfer Stations & Recycling Centers in NCC & NEKWMD

Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District
- Lyndonville, VT
- Provides recycling, HHW, & other services & helps towns comply with VT DEC requirements
- www.nekwmd.org

North Country Council
- Littleton, NH
- Regional planning
- Economic development
- www.nccouncil.org
Most rural towns operate their own transfer stations
- Most co-located with drop-off recycling centers
Virtually all disposal facilities in the private sector
- Only one landfill in all of VT (almost in Canada – but relatively close to NEKWMD towns)
- More options in NH, including one waste-to-energy
Burning trash is illegal in NH & VT (& all northeast)
Pay-as-you-throw
- Mandated for all VT communities since 2015
- Some NH communities have it – many don’t
Most TSs charge fees for bulky wastes

NEKWMD provides centralized services
- Towns collect self-sorted recyclables in Gaylords & bags
- NEKWMD trucks pick up recyclables & other collected materials & transports to NEKWMD facility
- Recyclables baled & marketed from NEKWMD facility
- NEKWMD arranges shipments of collected HHW, electronics, & other materials
Most NCC towns bale & market their own recyclables

The 3 R’s = Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Waste Management Hierarchy

- Source Reduction & Reuse
- Recycling / Composting
- Energy Recovery
- Treatment & Disposal

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
Community Based Social Marketing

An approach to achieving sustainable behavior in communities through:
1. Selecting which behavior to promote
2. Identifying the barriers & benefits
3. Developing strategies to overcome the barriers
4. Piloting the program
5. Evaluating the program once its implemented

Source: www.cbsm.com

Reduce
Reuse
Recycle
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

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

- Label drop-off areas clearly
- Publicize program:
  - Distribute outreach materials regularly
  - Make sure the information is sent to new residents
  - Get the word out about changes in service/s
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
General Communication Tips

Tailor your messaging to these two separate audiences/constituents

- People that already recycle
- People that do not recycle

Communication Tips: Recyclers

- 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

- 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)

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
Communications Message

Contributes 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

Communications Message

Recycling Can Be Mandatory
- Ordinances in some New Hampshire communities
- In all of Vermont:
  - Aluminum cans, pie plates, and foil
  - Steel cans
  - Glass bottles & jars from food & beverages
  - Corrugated cardboard
  - Paper – including white & colored paper, newspaper, magazine, catalogues, paper mail & envelopes, boxboard, & paper bags
  - Hard plastics – specifically PET (#1) & HDPE (#2) plastic bottles & jugs
- Items on this list are BANNED from solid waste disposal
New Handout

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
- Some eye-catching posters on benefits of recycling
- Source: NC Division of Environmental Assistance
Other Recycling Resources

MA Dept. of Environmental Protection
  • Recycle IQ Kit: (Applies to Single-Stream Programs)
    www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/recycle/grants/recycling-iq-kit.html

Environmental Protection Agency
  • Municipal Government Toolkit:

SC Dept. of Health & Environmental Control
  • Recycle Guys: http://www.recycleguys.org

Reduce
Reuse
Recycle
**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

**Challenge: Staff Limitations**

- There is only one transfer station attendant & they are helping someone else
- The resident quickly dumps the items in the trash compactor, before the attendant can get to them
- The resident doesn’t even realize their mistake – therefore, they are apt to do it again
Challenge: Convenience

- The resident has already packed up the materials & driven to the transfer station
- Even if they are made aware of other options (donation centers) – they may be unwilling to make another stop

Vehicle Drop-off Areas at Barnet Transfer Station in Vermont

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
Donate through charitable organizations:
- Salvation Army
- Goodwill
- Habitat for Humanity ReStores
- Often located in the larger “shopping” community
- Tax deduction for donations

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

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 Strategy

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

FCSWMD - Massachusetts

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
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

Photos: Pinterest

Other Reuse Ideas

Promote Swapping 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
Other Reuse Ideas

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

Reduce

Reuse
Recycle
### 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 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 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/
  - www.epa.gov/recycle/reducing-wasted-food-home

Donate appropriately

Communications Message

Easy to compost at home
- Contains valuable nutrients for gardens/farms
- Avoids transporting & reduces “yuck” factor
- Check out these resources:
  - http://nekwmd.org/organics.html
Communications Message

- 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 due to 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 (incineration only)

- Items banned from disposal in VT
  - Lead acid batteries; nickel-cadmium batteries; mercury products, electronic devices; leaf & yard waste; white goods; waste oil & filters; tires; paint; mandatory recyclables; & food waste (starting in 2020)
New Handout

Don't Trash That!

Some things should not go in the trash because they are danger to humans and others at the transfer station.

Please do not put these in the trash:

- Chemicals, household hazardous waste, and used batteries
- Aerosol cans
- Used oil

Other items banned from disposal:

- Construction debris
- Large furniture
- Paint
- Pool chemicals
- Antifreeze

Some things should not be in the trash because there are better things to do with them.

- Used yard waste
- Paper
- Glass

Workshop Summaries

Template version available
www.newmoa.org/solidwaste/projects/transferstations/publications.cfm
**NCC Workshop Summary**

- 21 transfer station workers from 16 towns
  - NH requires transfer station worker training & DES has a robust program
- 19 survey responses
  - 17 intend to use the outreach materials
  - Ideas they intend to implement/evaluate:
    ▪ 13 promote reuse/refurbish/repurpose ideas
    ▪ 12 improve recycling signage & outreach materials
    ▪ 11 promote recycling to people that don’t already
    ▪ 10 ask town officials to support recycling as priority
    ▪ 10 encourage people to “think before they buy”

**NEKWMD Workshop Summary**

- 10 transfer station workers from 5 towns
  - Transfer station workers need to be trained but no program in VT – mostly done “on the job”
- 9 survey responses
  - 8 intend to use the outreach materials
  - Ideas they intend to implement/evaluate:
    ▪ 9 improve recycling signage & outreach materials
    ▪ 6 promote recycling to people that don’t already
    ▪ 6 provide info on proper disposal of items that should not go in the regular trash
    ▪ 5 encourage people to “think before they buy”
NCC Workshop Summary

Illegal disposal items:
- TVs; CFLs; tires; batteries; paints; antifreeze; pesticides; unknown chemicals; liquids; ammunition

Good condition items thrown away:
- Furniture; tools; bikes; lawn mowers; gas grills; doors; windows; toys; clothing; Christmas stuff

Recyclables thrown away:
- Aluminum & metal cans; bottles; plastics; paper; cardboard; glass

NEKWMD Workshop Summary

Illegal disposal items:
- TVs; cans; plastics; refrigerators; paint; electronics

Good condition items thrown away:
- Furniture; tools; bikes; lawn mowers; paint; air conditioners; electronics; toys; clothing; random household items

Recyclables thrown away:
- Paint; batteries; plastic bottles; plastic films; paper; cardboard; glass
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
PAYT Resources

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 (template available)

www.newmoa.org/solidwaste/projects/bulky
Waste Paint Resources

- Brochure with detail & case studies
- Handout for the public with local information (template available)

www.newmoa.org/solidwaste/projects/paint

Questions?

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