

CLOSED LANDFILLS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE



INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Closed landfills are a long-term liability for municipalities because they can create environmental and other problems that negatively impact residents, visitors, and others. Landfill owners, including municipalities, are responsible for the costs of cleaning up environmental contamination. This Inspection Checklist is designed to help municipal officials properly maintain their closed landfill(s).

Many New Hampshire towns have *more than one* closed landfill – one that residents remember using, (often near the location of the current transfer station) and one or more that was used before that one opened. Municipal officials need to make sure they know about and maintain all of them.

This Checklist is for use at landfills that ceased operations BEFORE July 10, 1981. Landfills that ceased operations *after* July 9, 1981, have additional requirements and must complete and submit an “Annual Post-Closure Report” to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) every year¹.

A walkover inspection of the landfill site should be conducted at **least twice a year** by a knowledgeable municipal employee or a professional engineer:

- In the spring following snowmelt
- During or soon after the annual mowing event in the fall

¹ The report form and instructions are available at: <https://onlineforms.nh.gov/app/#/formversion/b1f20409-b048-430c-b28a-2cc1d493e3f1?FormTag=NHDES-S-05-057>

CHECKLIST

Name: _____

Organization and Position: _____

Landfill Name: _____

Town Where Landfill is Located: _____

Landfill Street Location: _____

Date of Inspection: _____

Circle the most applicable response for each question

VEGETATION				
	1	2	3	Notes/Action Items
Are trees or bushes growing on the landfill, including the side slopes?	None	Areas of brushy growth	Trees/bushes cover large areas	
Can you walk all the way around the landfill at the bottom of the side slope?	Yes	Some obstructed areas	Not at all	
Is grass growing over the entire landfill, including the side slopes?	Yes	Several small bare or mossy spots	Many large bare spots	
Are there animal burrows on the landfill, including the side slopes?	None	Several small	Many large or connected	

DRAINAGE				
	1	2	3	Notes/Action Items
Is the landfill graded so there are no depressions where water can pond? (if it hasn't recently rained, look for mossy growth or muddy looking bare spots)	Yes – no depressions	Several small depressions	Many large depressions	
Is there any evidence of erosion on the side slopes?	None	Several small concentrated channels a few inches deep	Many large channels with bare soil	
Are all drainage features that are located off the landfill (such as drainage swales/ditches, culverts, detention ponds) free of obstruction (including tree & shrub growth) & no evidence of sediment build up?	Yes – no obstructions & no sediment OR Not applicable – there are no off landfill drainage features	Some obstructions OR some sediment	Obstructions & sediment	

LEACHATE SEEPS			
	1	2	3
When walking around the landfill, is there any soil that is stained orange or an area where liquid is seeping from the slope?	No	A small dry area	A large wet area
Notes/Action Items			

LANDFILL GAS				
	1	2	3	Notes/Action Items
Are there any buildings located on the landfill itself?	No		Yes	
Are there any building or other structures located around the base of the landfill?	None	More than 100 feet away	Within 100 feet	
Are all gas vents in good condition?	Yes OR Not applicable – no gas vents	1 has cracks or missing screen	More than 1 is broken	

PROPERTY ACCESS				
	1	2	3	Notes/Action Items
Is access to the property restricted?	Yes – gate locked & no way around	Somewhat restricted – some boulders or tree logs	No barrier to entry	
Are there “no entry” signs warning the public that there is a landfill?	Yes		No	
Is there evidence of unauthorized access (such as ATV trails or illegal dumping)?	No		Yes	

GROUNDWATER MONITORING WELLS			
	1	2	3
Are all groundwater monitoring wells at the landfill accessible & easy to find & covered & locked?	Yes – all in good condition & locked OR Not applicable – no groundwater monitoring wells	Hard to find – covered but not locked	Cannot find any of them
Notes/Action Items			

The results of each inspection should be shared with one or more senior municipal officials, such as the Selectboard Chair, the Town Manager, the Director of Public Works, and/or the Town Clerk.

- Any answers other than “1” require follow-up to address deficiencies.
- **Any answers of “3” require immediate attention** – contact NHDES for advice and assistance. Also consult the “Closed Landfills in New Hampshire: Guide to Best Management Practices & Requirements” for more information. (Available at https://www.newmoa.org/nh_closed_landfill_bmps/)
- Any answers of “2” indicate an issue that needs ongoing monitoring and/or attention before the situation worsens.

NHDES IS HERE TO HELP!

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) can answer questions and provide advice and limited technical guidance to municipalities. NHDES is most interested in providing cooperative assistance to address problems as soon as they arise. Contact NHDES’ Solid Waste Management Bureau: (603) 271-2925 or solidwasteinfo@des.nh.gov. Additional information is available from NHDES: <https://www.des.nh.gov/waste/solid-waste>



NEWMOA is a non-profit, non-partisan, interstate association whose membership is composed of the state environment agency programs that address pollution prevention, toxics use reduction, sustainability, materials management, hazardous waste, solid waste, emergency response, waste site cleanup, underground storage tanks, and related environmental challenges in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont (www.newmoa.org).

This document was developed by NEWMOA with input from the Project Partners:

- New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES)
- Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District (NEKWMD)
- Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VT DEC)

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