Solid Waste Management for Vermont Municipalities

Vermont Solid Waste District Managers Association -- Helping to Reduce Waste Throughout Vermont

73rd Annual Town Officers Education Conferences – April 3 & 10, 2018
What is a Solid Waste District?

The Vermont Solid Waste District Managers Association is comprised of 14 members – 10 Waste Districts and 4 Resource/Waste Alliances.

566,954 residents in 232 towns are represented by their membership in the VSWDMA. The organization represents 91% of Vermont’s total population.

- Districts are “union” Municipal Districts
- Authorized by statute in 1987
- Taxing and Ordinance Authority
- Districts exist to serve district residents in reducing waste
- SWMEs include: Districts, Alliances, Groups, Towns
Vermont’s Solid Waste District Map
SWMEs: What if my Town isn’t part of a District?

- Alliance (Mad River)
- Town (Hartford)
- Group (Londonderry)
- Few Taxes – Fewer Resources & Programming
Act 148 -- VERMONT'S UNIVERSAL RECYCLING LAW

"An act relating to establishing the universal recycling of solid waste."

In 2012, the Vermont Legislature unanimously passed the Universal Recycling Law (Act 148), which effectively bans disposal of three major types of waste materials commonly found in Vermonter's trash bins over the course of six years:
- "blue bin" recyclables **BY JULY 2015**
- leaf and yard debris; clean wood **BY JULY 2016**
- food scraps (organic, compostable kitchen wastes) **BY JULY 2020**.
Act 148 changes our view from “waste” to...
Materials Management
Universal Recycling calls for Separation

Trash

Mandatory Recyclables*

Leaf/Yard Debris, clean Wood, Food Scraps

* paper, aluminum, cardboard, steel, glass, hard plastics
VT Act 148 Universal Recycling Law

- Most significant change to VT solid waste law since 1988
- Approved unanimously by legislature
- Focuses on recyclables and organics (food/yard waste)
- Seeks to reduce waste and create more consistent services statewide
- Phased approach to allow infrastructure to develop
- Vermont is first state in the country with a statewide ban
Universal Recycling Timeline

July 1, 2014

- Transfer Stations/Drop-Off Facilities must accept residential recyclables at no extra charge

- Food scrap generators of 104 tons/year (2 tons/week) must divert material to any certified facility within 20 miles
Timeline

July 1, 2015

- Statewide unit based pricing
- Recyclables banned from the landfill
- Haulers must offer residential recycling collection at no extra charge
- Public buildings must provide recycling containers alongside all trash containers in public spaces
- Food scrap generators of 52 tons/year (1 ton/week) must divert material to any certified facility within 20 miles
Timeline

July 1, 2016

- Leaf, yard, and clean wood debris are banned from the landfill
- Haulers must offer leaf and yard debris collection
- Food scrap generators of 26 tons/year (1/2 ton/week) must divert material to any certified facility within 20 miles
Timeline

July 1, 2017
- Transfer Stations/Drop-Off Facilities must accept food scraps
- Food scrap generators of 18 tons/year (1/3 ton/week) must divert material to any certified facility within 20 miles (i.e. smaller restaurant)

July 1, 2020
- Food scraps are banned from the landfill

And we are on our way to Zero Waste!
The statewide six

These six materials can now be recycled everywhere in Vermont. But even that causes questions, so here are examples of what can/can't go into the bins.

1. **Paper**
   - Magazines, Newspapers, Mail, Catalogs, Phone books, and Mixed paper
   - but not: Paper towels, Soft tissues, Hardcover books

2. **Aluminum**
   - Cans, foil, Pie Tins & Trays
   - but not: Aluminum siding, Scrap metal, Pots or Pans

3. **Cardboard**
   - Dry & clean cardboard, Cereal and Cracker boxes
   - but not: Juice cartons, Frozen food containers, Greasy pizza boxes

4. **Steel**
   - Cans (including tin), Lids, Empty Aerosol cans
   - but not: Major appliances, Scrap metal, Pesticide sprays, Paint cans

5. **Glass**
   - Beer bottles, Wine bottles, Mason jars
   - but not: Window glass, Light bulbs, Ceramic dishes

6. **Hard Plastics**
   - Water/soda bottles (remove caps please), Milk jugs, Shampoo bottles
   - but not: Plastic bags, Styrofoam, Large plastic toys

Vermont's Recycling & Composting Initiative
Recyclables

Single Stream Recycling, Chittenden MRF
Recycling “Best Practices”

- **Do** rinse recyclable containers clean. They don't have to be perfect—just free of most residue.
- **Do** breakdown and fold large cardboard boxes.
- **Don't** put anything smaller than two inches on two sides in your recycling bin.
- **Don't** place plastic bags in the recycling bin. Bags clog up the sorting machines.
- **Don't** put anything with leftover food on it in the recycling.
- **Don't** place styrofoam in the recycling. Vermont recycling facilities don't accept styrofoam.
Vermont Food Recovery Hierarchy

- Source Reduction
- Food for People
- Food for Animals
- Composting & Anaerobic Digestion
- Energy Recovery

Most Preferred

Least Preferred
FOOD WASTE IN THE U.S. IS...

EXCESSIVE

40% OF ALL FOOD PRODUCED IN THE U.S. IS WASTED

133 BILLION POUNDS

Food wasted per year. That represents 1,249 calories per person, per day.

EXPENSIVE

$161 BILLION

Uneaten food at retailers, restaurants, and homes costs $161 billion annually

$1,500

Per capita, this amounts to over $1,500 for a family of four

ENVIRONMENTALLY HARMFUL

Food makes up 20% of landfill weight—the single largest municipal waste source

CH$_4$ + CO$_2$

The methane released by food is a greenhouse gas 21 times more powerful than carbon dioxide

AN OPPORTUNITY

Diverting 15% of the food that currently goes to waste would be enough to cut the number of food insecure Americans in half

Food waste can be composted into sustainable soil additives or be used to generate electricity

Encouraging institutions to purchase so-called “ugly” produce would help farmers find new markets for healthy products that currently go to waste
What can be composted at home?
WHAT GOES IN THE COMPOST?

**Edible Items:**
- meat and bones
- fish and seafood
- fruits and vegetables
- eggs and eggshells
- milk, cheese and other dairy
- dressing and condiments
- sauces and soups
- bread, pasta, and pastries
- coffee grounds
- nuts (including shells)
- spices, oils, and butter

**Non-edible Items:**
- Paper egg cartons
- coffee filters
- tea bags

**No:**
- floral products; paper coffee cups; “compostable” cups, bags or utensils, cloth tea bags

Remember!
No PLU Stickers in the compost!
Vermont’s Materials Management Plan (MMP)

- The MMP -- formerly referred to as the State Solid Waste Implementation Plan -- is the State's comprehensive statewide strategy for the management of waste and materials.

- As mandated by Vermont law (10 V.S.A. § 6604), the plan must be renewed and published by the Agency of Natural Resources at least once every five years.

- SWMEs — (Districts, alliances, groups, and independent towns) — are required to adopt an approved Solid Waste Implementation Plan (SWIP), and to report each year.
Vermont’s Materials Management Plan (MMP)

- Plan Vision
  - To prevent waste from being generated,
  - To promote sustainable materials management, with a preference for highest and best uses,
  - To minimize reliance on waste disposal (landfilling and incineration), and
  - To conserve resources, minimize energy consumption, and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and other adverse environmental impacts.
For More Information:

- What Do I Do With . . . ? --

- Go to www.802recycles.com

- Find your local/regional Solid Waste organization:
  http://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/local-districts

Thanks for your Interest!!