



**RUTLAND COUNTY
SOLID WASTE DISTRICT**
RECYCLE + REDUCE + REUSE + COMPOST

Questions & Answers

from the March 2021 Survey...

Question: What is being done to ensure the muddy brush drop off area is more accessible for vehicles without 4-wheel drive?

Answer: This mud has been there forever. It is an eternity of mud season in Vermont. RCSWD has conceptualized a new layout for the brush drop off and brush stockpile area. We have separated our stockpile area from our drop off area. Furthermore, RCSWD will continue to prioritize keeping both areas as clean as possible by having staff maintain the areas with heavy equipment and by hand daily. Signage has and will be installed to aid the community in ensuring contamination does not get included during their visits. Concrete barriers are being used to separate material. In the new layout, we are focusing on keeping a well-kept and less muddy drop off area.

Question: Where can I find information about recycling if I do not have a computer?

Answer: You can find information at our Recycling center and form our staff at the Gleason Road transfer station if you do not have a computer. You can also call the administration office at 802-775-7209.

Question: What plastics do you take and why are some plastics not recyclable?

Answer: We only take plastics #1, #2 natural, #2 color and #5 plastics. Some of the other plastics are not recyclable because of market conditions and the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) only works with recycling mills who takes #1, #2 and #5 plastics.

Question: What do I do with pellet bags? Why are they not recyclable?

Answer: Pellet bags are not recyclable because the MRF has no recycling mill that takes them.

Question: Why do we need to sort out recycling at the transfer station when curbside does zero-sort?

Answer: The Gleason Road requires that recyclables are pre-sorted such that we don't have to pay a middleman to sort them. Zero sort is very expensive, if this cost was passed on to us, it would have to be passed onto the users. It is very important that all users that use our recycling center pre sort their recyclables. It only takes one bad actor to cause a whole container to become contaminated. If this happens, we will be charged the same price trash cost (instead of receiving revenue for the commodity). This cost will need to be recovered somehow.

Question: Why is there a charge for food waste?

Answer: Currently we do not compost food waste, instead we use a second party to truck it off to a facility that does.

Question: What can be put in the food waste at the transfer station?

Answer: Food scraps are:

1. parts of food that are typically discarded rather than eaten: peels, rinds, cores, eggshells, seeds, pits, bones, shells, coffee grounds and filters, loose-leaf tea, and fats/oils/grease, and
2. food that was eaten but not finished: "plate scraps" or leftovers that went bad. Any type of food can become food scraps—bread, pasta, soup, vegetables, fruit, sauces, meat, fish, dairy, sweets, etc.

Question: Why is there a fee for brush and limbs?

Answer: RCSWD collects and stockpiles yard debris. When the pile's capacity is reached, which is not difficult to do, RCSWD contracts with a professional commercial grinding/chipping company that turns the pile into clean woodchips. The clean woodchips are delivered to Burlington Electric, where they are burned to produce electricity. Whereas most rural transfer stations have the ability to burn brush onsite, the urban environment of the Rutland Transfer Station prevents RCSWD from holding an open burn. However, by converting this material into an energy source at Burlington Electric, RCSWD maintains a program that has a circular recycling process, which is what we strive for.

We have heard loudly that RCSWD wishes to continue with this process. However, RCSWD must adapt to economic realities. Wood chipping costs and hauling costs have increased. The district expends tens of thousands of dollars on chipping and hauling annually for this program. Simultaneously, Burlington Electric has decreased the amount they pay for woodchips. RCSWD operational cost and resources needed to maintain and self-sustain this program, the district must pass a fee for this service.

Question: Why don't you have a per 30-gallon bag fee for leaves?

Answer: Currently, we are asking for \$5.00 per cubic yard for leaves. We are also having a problem with customers bring us plastic bags and leaving them with the leaves they disposed of. Plastic trash bags are considered a contamination issue we are having. We will be readjusting our prices for residential customer. This adjustment will be \$1.00 per paper bag of leaves, and \$2.00 per paper bag for brush. Each of these items will need to be disposed of in their proper location.

Question: Why do I need a permit?

Answer: Permits have been in existence since 1979. RCSWD is a union municipal district that exists to cooperatively and comprehensively address the solid waste management interests of its member towns. To maximize the potential services to the member town we need to know who our customers are. A permit will also offer a discount and services over those that don't have a permit. It will also allow you to access for residential, commercial, and registered hauler services at the Gleason Transfer Station for Recycling, MSW, HHW, Food Waste, C&D, Leaf & Yard, Tires, etc. Residential (non-sharable) permits apply to specific individual use within a household.

Question: Why did the permit price go up so much?

Answer: Permits have been in existence since 1979. The cost of a residual permit has been \$10.00 since this year. Considering the average cost for a permit is \$40.00 in Vermont, we believe this is still a good price. There are not many businesses that can say they were able to hold their prices for twenty-four years. The goal of this increase is to pay for operational expenses.

Question: Why do people need a permit to recycle?

Answer: See answer to above questions answer.

Question: Why do you need my car information and VIN for my permit

Answer: In the past we were experiencing several problems. One was that we realized that many individuals and businesses were not paying for their permits each year by January 1st. We realized that residential permits were incorrectly provided to businesses. We realized that non-district towns were provided in-district prices, and that customers were sharing their permit with many others. Each of these concessions came as an added expense to those who purchased and used a permit correctly. This practice is unfair and is a violation of our policies. In the process of managing our permits we require: that you purchase it on line at www.rcswd.com (or call 802 775-7209); answer the question correctly when applying for the permit; bring your permit to the transfer station each time you use it and show the attendant your permit. The attendant will need to see that it is a valid permit and a valid vehicle.

Question: Why wasn't I notified of changes to prices and permit process?

Answer: We did reach out to those who pay attention to any social media service, posted it on our website. We also gave at least 30 days' notice to those who use the Gleason Road transfer station. The new permit process which includes your basic contact information will allow us to manage this process and, will allow us to reach out to you quicker. The new permit process was initiated from a previous survey that overwhelmingly supported this upgrade. It is a touch less process that complies with COVID-19 protocols and allow one to obtain their permit from the comfort of their own home or business within five minutes.

Question: Why did the price change at the commercial scale?

Answer: The prices going over the scale did not increase per ton. The minimum price at the commercial scale did go up to equalize with the cost of what a bag of trash cost at the drop-off center and from a regional market analysis. If one prefers, you can also drop-off trash and recyclables at this location.

Question: What if I have multiple vehicles in my household?

Answer: Residential permits are for that use. More specifically for one household only. Usually, one vehicle is needed to visit the transfer station each week or so. We are understanding if a vehicle is temporally out of service too. If a vehicle is exchanged for a new one, please contact us at 802 775-7209 to update our records and your permit.

Question: Why do we need to make an appointment to drop off hazardous waste when all other programs are open without an appointment?

Answer: This is a two-prong answer, household hazardous waste can be very dangerous if handled improperly can cause serious harm and injury. When the COVID-19 pandemic started, this program was deemed non-essential by the State of Vermont and discontinued. In June of 2020 RCSWD opened it up but with controls on it. These controls were in place to ensure social distancing, wearing a mask or face covering and that the program will operate in a safe manner. Lines of people wanting to drop off a battery or two was considered non-essential travel. By implementing an appointment schedule, we were able to add the safety required to this program. There are no lines and COVID-19 protocols are adhered to. The household hazardous waste operator also has ample time to ensure the documentation and proper storage of all items are done as required by law. Appointments are required so that we can track and record who, what and where the materials came from. We no longer do walk-in because people in the past have abused the system by leaving hazardous waste material unattended and not notifying anyone of it. RCSWD was issued a violation and was fined by Vermont DEC for improper mishandling of HHW because of that.

Question: Why don't you have a bin at recycling center for household batteries and regular light bulbs?

Answer: Convince is not always the only way. Batteries and lightbulbs need to be dropped off at our HHW depot because the state requires that we track and record who, what and where the materials came from.