

Solid and hazardous waste is a concern in the field of environmental health. When improperly managed or disposed of, these materials can damage our environment and threaten public health and safety. The Waste Management and Prevention Division of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has regulatory authority over the management and disposal of solid and hazardous waste.

KEY POINTS

- **When improperly managed or disposed of, solid and hazardous waste can damage our environment and threaten public health and safety.**

Materials Banned From Landfills

Several materials are banned from landfills and must be managed in certain ways to reduce waste and protect our environment, health and safety. More information about landfill disposal bans, recycling, composting, and the safe management of waste materials is available online at:

VTRecycles.com

Recycling and Food Scraps

THOs may receive complaints from residents who do not have recycling options available to them as required by the Rental Housing Health and Safety Code. Food scraps are banned from the trash and THOs may receive complaints from residents who do not have a food scrap diversion option as required by the Rental Housing Health and Safety Code. Residents can compost food scraps on-site, drop them off at a transfer station or bag drop, or have them picked up by a hauler. Recycling, composting and food waste prevention information can be found at VTRecycles.com.

Improper Disposal of Garbage and Unpermitted Salvage/Junk Yards

THOs may also receive calls from concerned residents regarding improper disposal of materials such as garbage or hazardous waste. DEC has authority over these wastes and officials can provide assistance and investigate or address the complaint. In some situations, the DEC official may ask the THO to investigate the situation initially or suggest performing a joint inspection.

Anyone who stores four or more unregistered motor vehicles must obtain a Salvage Yard Permit from Vermont DEC and a Certificate of Approved Location (COAL) from their municipality.

[Information on salvage yards can be found on DEC's website.](#)

THOs have general statutory responsibility to protect public health in their communities (18 V.S.A. §§ 126, 127, and 130). While garbage is not necessarily a public health hazard if a THO has investigated and determined that a solid or hazardous material or waste issue (for example, a neighborhood rodent infestation caused by the improper disposal or storage of garbage) is creating a public health hazard within their jurisdiction, they may seek voluntary compliance and take enforcement action if necessary. A THO can successfully resolve many of these types of complaints by requiring cleanup of the waste.

THOs can also be designated by the Selectboard to issue tickets for illegal dumping and burning (see [24 V.S.A. § 2201](#)).

Hazardous Material Spills

Any release or discharge that meets spill reporting criteria (see below) shall be immediately reported to:

- **DEC Spill Response Program at 802-828-1138**, Monday through Friday, 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **Department of Public Safety, HAZMAT Hotline at 800-641-5005**, available 24 hours a day in case DEC cannot be reached during office hours.

If a release cannot be contained using immediately available on-scene resources, call 9-1-1. The Fire Department has local authority over hazardous material incidents in their jurisdiction and will be able to request additional resources as needed through either Vermont Emergency Management or the Vermont Hazardous Materials Response Team.

The Vermont Emergency Management Watch Officer contact number (for non-hazardous materials incidents) is 800-347-0488 (24 hours.) Spill reporting criteria are defined in the Vermont Hazardous Waste Management Regulations as:

- i. A discharge of hazardous waste, or release of hazardous material that exceeds 2 gallons;
- ii. A discharge of hazardous waste, or release of hazardous material that is less than or equal to 2 gallons and poses a potential or actual threat to human health or the environment; or
- iii. A discharge of hazardous waste, or release of hazardous material that equals or exceeds its corresponding reportable quantity under CERCLA as specified under 40 CFR § 302.4. Note: Under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, certain spills of “oil” and/or “hazardous substances” are prohibited and must be reported pursuant to the requirements of 40 CFR Part 110 / Discharge of Oil. Certain spills of hazardous substances must also be reported. In both cases, the National Response Center must be notified at 800-424-8802. Finally, in addition to federal and state spill reporting, spills must also be reported to local authorities.

If there is uncertainty regarding when to report a release, the DEC Spill Response Program encourages THOs to report regardless of the quantity or type of material released.

Contact:

Department of Environmental Conservation Waste Management and Prevention Division, 802-828-1138

Department of Environmental Conservation [Environmental Enforcement Officers](#)