Northwest Vermont
Solid Waste District

Back-To-School Recycling Guide

Hello From NWSWD!

Northwest Vermont Solid Waste District (NWSWD) is a municipal agency that oversees waste management and reduction for our 19 member communities. We provide a variety of services to Franklin and Grand Isle County schools (except Fairfax) including technical assistance, curriculum activities and presentations, food scrap diversion assistance, signage, and field trips.

NWSWD believes schools play a critical role in educating the public on recycling and waste management. By implementing a recycling program, your school isn't just complying with the law, it is helping to transform communities and all of Vermont to a more sustainable way of life.

This recycling "back-to-school" guide is designed to help schools understand what Vermont's recycling law requires of them. It also provides resources and recommendations for implementing school-wide waste reduction, recycling, and composting programs.

- **Email us at info@nwswd.org**
- **Sign up for our newsletter at nwswd.org**
- **Call us at (802) 524 - 5986**
- **Facebook @Northwest Vermont Solid Waste Management District**
- **Instagram @northwest.vt.zerowaste**

NWSWD Drop-Off Sites

Georgia Recycling Center
158 Morse Dr.
Monday - Friday 8:30 am - 3:30 pm
Saturday 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

St. Albans City Drop-Off
Wastewater Treatment Plant, 83 Rewes Dr.
Satuday 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

Bakersfield Drop-Off
Old Fire Station, 86 Mountain Rd.
Saturday 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

Montgomery Drop-Off
Fire Station, 86 Mountain Rd.
Saturday 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

North Hero Drop-Off
362 W. Shore Rd.
Saturday 8:00 am - 2:00 pm

Hudak Farm
599 St Albans Rd., Swanton
Every Day 8:00 am - 7:00 pm
Food Scraps, leaves, yard waste, brush, branches only. No trash/recycling

St. Albans Creamery CO-OP Store
138 Federal St., St Albans
Visit website for current hours. Food scraps only. No trash/recycling

Get Involved With NWSWD

All of our educational services are provided at no cost and can be tailored to meet your needs!

Activities. Choose from a number of fun and engaging activities related to solid waste management and sustainability: Upcycled Makerspace • Classroom Zero Waste Competition • Green and Clean • HHW Label Identification • Trash on The Lawn Day.

Field Trips. We offer tours to groups at our Georgia Recycling Center and our composting facility at Hudak Farm. See where your waste goes for processing!

Presentations. We have a range of classroom programs about waste reduction, composting, recycling, and upcycling that are educational and interactive: The Ins-and-Outs of NWSWD • What Goes Where? • Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

Waste Audits. Waste audits are the process of quantifying the amount and type of waste being generated at schools. These audits help identify current waste practices and how they can be improved. Our audit process will also help to engage your institution in waste reduction efforts, measure the efficacy of existing programs and initiatives, and identify opportunities for improvement.

Bins & Signage. We provide brochures, posters, and other printed materials to help clearly label trash, recycling, and food scraps containers and educate staff and students. We also have blue recycling bins available for purchase for $6 a bin.

Compost Program Support. We will help to improve your food scrap diversion program by explaining how the Vermont Universal Recycling Law applies to your school, providing onsite assistance and guidance, and addressing any questions you may have!

Items Banned From Landfill

To reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions, protect public health, and conserve resources and landfill space, Vermont law bans certain items from the trash. These materials must be properly disposed of through your solid waste district, town transfer station, or a permitted waste hauler.

Blue-Bin Recycling

Plastic #1 and #2

Cardboard, Mixed Paper, Newspaper

Glass Jars & Bottles

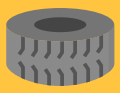
Cans & Foil

Special Recycling

Electronics

Large Appliances

Clean Wood



Tires

Scrap Metal

Asphalt Shingles, Plywood, OSB, Drywall

Lead Acid & Rechargeable Batteries

Hazardous Waste

Paints, Stains, Varnish, & Thinner

Used Oil, Filters, Autofluids

Chemical Cleaners & Pesticides

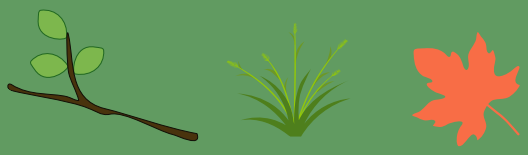
Explosives, Fireworks, Sharps

Mercury-Containing Bulbs, Thermostats, Thermometers, etc.

Propane Cylinders

Compost

Food scraps, coffee grounds, egg shells, etc.



Leaf and yard debris, grass clippings, branches, etc.

How To Manage *Blue-Bin Recycling*

Blue-Bin Includes

Boxboard

Plastic Bottles, Tubs, & Jugs

Aluminum Steel, Tin Cans & Foil

Paper, Mail, Newspapers, Phone Books, Magazines

Glass Food and Beverage Bottles & Jars

Corrugated Cardboard & Paper Bags

Clamshells & Food Trays

Do Not Include

NO Paper Plates, Cups, or Napkins

NO Household Items or Toys

NO Styrofoam

NO Juice Boxes

NO Filmy Plastic Bags

NO Milk, Juice, or Ice Cream Cartons

NO Black Plastic

Disposal Options

All trash haulers are required to provide recycling services in Vermont.

Blue-bin recycling can be dropped off at one of the NWSWD drop-off sites.

Tips For Recycling Blue-Bin Materials

- Label your recycling bins with signs that describe what can be recycled.
- Rinse containers clean and leave to dry before placing in blue-bin.
- Flatten cardboard boxes, do not leave Styrofoam in, do not include wet materials.
- Follow the rule of 2: minimum size = 2" on any 2 sides, maximum size = 2' on any one side.

How To Manage *Special Recycling*

Special Recycling Includes

Batteries (Lead Acid & Rechargeable)

Electronics (Computers and Accessories, All Phones, Televisions, MP3 Players, DVDs, etc.)

Tires

Large Appliances and Scrap Metal

Clean Wood (Not Pressure Treated/Paints)

Asphalt Shingles, Plywood, OSB, & Drywall

These items don't belong in the blue-bin, but can be recycled elsewhere!

Disposal Options

Most of these items can be recycled at NWSWD facilities.

Find out where to drop off your special recyclables on our A-Z Disposal Guide at nwswd.org.

Tips For Recycling Special Materials

- Separate these materials from regular blue-bin recyclables.
- Collection programs exist for a number of materials. Refer to our recycling guide for more information.

How To Manage *Compost*

Compost Includes

Fruits & Veggies

Bread, Grains, & Pasta

Meat & Bones

Eggs & Eggshells

Seafood & Shells

Milk, Cheese & Other Dairy

(Paper) Tea Bags, Loose Tea

Coffee Grounds & Filters

Spices, Dressings, & Condiments

Nuts & Shells

Soups, Sauces, Oil, & Fats

Leaf & Yard Debris, Grass Clippings

Branches, Twigs, Straw, & Hay

Do Not Include

NO PLU (Produce) Stickers

NO Compostable Bags

NO Plastic Bags

NO Plastic-Coated Products

NO Store-Bought Flowers

NO Styrofoam

NO Dog or Cat Feces or Litter

NO Compostable Utensils

Disposal Options

Compost on-site with a homemade bin or purchased container.

Feed your own chickens or pigs.

Drop off compostable materials at the NWSWD facilities or partner drop-off sites. Check nwswd.org for more information.

Use a hauler (NWSWD offers commercial food scraps pickup!).

Tips For Reducing Food Waste

Offer-versus-serve (OVS). OVS allows students to decline some of the food components in a reimbursable meal, providing choice and reducing waste.

Market your meals. Highlight new foods on your menus and serving lines. Consider holding taste tests and recipe competitions or creating a student advisory committee to provide feedback on food acceptability and recipe names.

Extend lunch from 20 to 30 minutes. Extending the lunch period can improve dietary intake and reduce food waste.

Create share tables. Share tables are designated stations where children may return whole and/or unopened food or beverage items they choose not to eat. These items are then made available to other children who may want another serving during or after the meal service.

Save food items. Students who may not have time to finish their meal during the designated lunch period may save certain meal components for later in the day. For food safety reasons, this practice should be limited to food items that do not require cooling or heating.

Donate What Is Appropriate

Schools that wish to donate food have protections under the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act. The Act grants liability protections for "persons and gleaners" who make good faith donations to nonprofits for ultimate distribution to needy individuals at zero cost or at a good Samaritan reduced price.

- **All donated food should be protected to prevent food contamination by storing in packages, covered containers, or wrappings.**
- **Contact the following organizations for information on how to donate and how to prepare leftovers to ensure they meet food safety requirements: Martha's Kitchen, Champlain Islands Food Shelf, Georgia Food Shelf.**

How To Manage *Hazardous Waste*

Hazardous Waste Includes

Fluorescent Lightbulbs

Mercury Thermostats (older, with dials), Thermometers, and Switches

Used Oil, Filters, and Auto Fluids

Propane Cylinders and Gasoline

Explosives, Fireworks, and Sharps (NOT accepted at NWSWD facilities or events)

Chemical Cleaners and Pesticides

Do Not Include

NO Asbestos (A licensed asbestos abatement contractor should handle asbestos)

NO Medical Waste (Regulated medical waste requires special handling)

NO Radioactive Materials

Disposal Options

Drop off at the NWSWD Georgia facility year-round by appointment.

NWSWD holds household hazardous waste collection events May-September in various district towns on a rotating basis. Check out the full schedule at nwswd.org.

Tips For Managing Hazardous Waste

Create a team to manage hazardous waste at your school. Members should include: a school administrator, lead custodial staff, a hazardous materials coordinator, and students (optional).

Identify which hazardous materials are used and stored on school property. Commonly found materials: light bulbs, paints, fertilizers, printer toners, cleaning supplies, medical equipment, refrigerants, drain cleaners, pottery clear coating glaze, concentrated acids, aerosol cans, science department lab chemicals.

Inventory the hazardous materials entering the school and how they are being disposed. Develop a tracking sheet that includes columns for "chemical name of material", "shortened name" (if there is one), "where it is stored", "size of the container" (if applicable), and "number of containers". Create a schedule to update the inventory.

Create a plan to limit the use and storage of hazardous materials. Identify dangerous chemicals that should not be present or used. Work with facility staff, repair personnel, science teachers, and art teachers to limit the use of dangerous chemicals. Educate staff on environmentally preferred alternatives to more hazardous materials. Do not purchase more hazardous materials before auditing current supply. Include in audit: lab chemicals, art supplies, and facility maintenance materials such as cleaning products, paint, fluorescent light bulbs, etc.

Create a storage plan for hazardous waste. Keep hazardous waste stored in as few locations as possible and follow hazardous waste storage requirements. Make sure the storage area is clean, dry, and free of obstructions.

Create school-wide standardized procedures for how, when, and where collection and disposal of hazardous waste will occur. Set up collection days for staff to go through their hazardous material and bring it to a designated consolidation area for proper packaging and removal by a Hazardous Waste Contractor. When possible, work with NWSWD to access our services, HHW events, and/or HHW facility.

Educate Faculty & Students. Annually train teachers that handle hazardous materials. Faculty and students who use hazardous chemicals should learn and practice procedures necessary to minimize exposure to these substances. Science teachers using hazardous materials, such as lab chemicals, must train students before use. Explain the connection between hazardous materials and health and environmental issues. Incorporate lessons about hazardous products and hazardous waste awareness. Explain how hazardous materials can be reduced, reused, and disposed of properly. Offer suggestions for use of non-hazardous products for both school and home.

Extended Producer Responsibility Program

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a mandatory type of product stewardship in which the manufacturer is responsible for helping properly manage its products even after they have been sold. Vermont's EPR laws share the cost of recycling and safe materials management between manufacturers and consumers and increase collection and recycling rates of covered products.

The Following EPR Laws Have Been Passed In Vermont

Certain Dry-Cell Batteries | Effective 1992

Lead-acid Batteries | Effective 1993

Automobile Switches | Effective 2006

Mercury Thermostats | Effective 2008

Electronic Waste | Effective 2011

Mercury Lamps | Effective 2011

Architectural Paint | Effective 2013

Primary Batteries | Effective 2016

Collection Options For EPR Programs

Electronics

Find a drop-off location at www.vtecycles.org or call 1-855-63-CYCLE
Accepted: Televisions · Computers · Monitors · Desktop Printers · Computer Peripherals (mouse, keyboard, scanner, computer speakers, etc.)

Paint

Find a drop-off location at www.paintcare.org or call 1-855-63-CYCLE
Quarts, Gallons, and 5 Gallons (in original can with label and lid)
Accepted: Oil-Based · Acrylic · Latex · Enamel · Stains · Shellac · Lacquer · Varnish
Not Accepted: NO aerosol paint cans · NO empty paint cans · NO unlabeled cans · NO leaking or damaged cans · NO cans of dried paint

Batteries

Find a drop-off location at www.call2recycle.org/vermont or call 1-855-63-CYCLE
Accepted: Single-Use Batteries · AA, AAA, C, D · 9-Volt · Button Cell · Hearing Aids · Rechargeables (up to 11 lbs.) · Cell Phones (all types, entire phone)

Mercury-Containing Thermostats

Find a drop-off location at www.thermostat-recycle.org or call 1-855-63-CYCLE
Don't trash it, CASH it! GET $5 for every mercury thermostat recycled! Drop off the entire mercury thermostat. You will receive either a $5 in-store credit or a rebate.

Mercury-Containing Bulbs

Find a drop-off location at www.lamprecycle.org or call 1-855-63-CYCLE
Accepted Materials: Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs (CFLs)
Up to 10 per day: Fluorescent Tubes · Circulines · High Intensity Discharge (HID) · Mercury Vapor · U-Tube

Getting Started

There are many ways to begin and sustain a successful school recycling program. While careful planning and diligence will help ensure success, it's important to remember that there are many resources and people available to help.

1. Gather Stakeholders

Hold a kick-off meeting of key stakeholders (such as the administration, business managers, supportive faculty, cafeteria and custodial staff, Farm-To-School coordinators, Master Composters, NWSWD staff, student environmental groups, parent volunteers, etc.) to discuss options, share perspectives, concerns, and create buy in.

Suggested Topics For Stakeholder Meeting

- Overview of Vermont's Universal Recycling Law (Act 148).
- What waste and recycling management systems are currently in place at the school? What does or does not work well? Include a discussion of current waste and recycling service costs.
- What services may be needed?
- Where are recycling bins and composting containers needed? How frequently will they be emptied?
- How will training about what is recyclable and compostable be provided to students, faculty, and staff?
- Are there on-site composting options?
- Consider conducting a Waste Assessment.
- Set initial goals for the month and year.
- Delegate responsibilities for moving forward with a recycling program and schedule recurring check-in meetings.

A kick-off meeting is also an opportunity to identify participants for a recycling and composting team (EcoTeam) or committee that will take charge of specific tasks. The EcoTeam can create an action plan, coordinate the work, ensure all stakeholders are committed, measure and regularly update others on progress, and troubleshoot issues that may arise.

2. Waste Assessment

Collecting data on your school's waste will establish valuable baseline information and allow you to track progress. It is best to gather this information before changing or implementing new programs.

Important Data To Collect

- Amount of trash your school produces on a weekly or monthly basis. Amount of recycling and compost that is diverted weekly or monthly.
- Number of containers for trash and recycling available to students, faculty, and staff throughout the building and grounds.
- Amount and quality of labeling and signage associated with recycling and composting containers.
- Collection costs for current services.

Hold a Trash Separation Day to see just how much recyclable or compostable materials are being thrown out. During a trash separation day event, students empty and sort through the school's trash (not from restrooms) on a large tarp outside or in the gym. Students separate out recyclable items and food scraps to determine how much of the school's current waste stream could be recycled or composted.

3. Making A Plan

Once you know more about how your school manages its waste, the services you have or need, and your current waste and recycling rates, it's time to make a recycling plan.

- Set goals. Create goals for the short term and first year. Consider creating a three year plan with more ambitious and longer-term goals.
- Create an action plan for how you will attain the goals.
- Establish a method and a person or group who will track progress.
- Delegate responsibilities for moving forward.
- Revisit the plan after implementation, to assess its effectiveness, and make any needed adjustments.

4. Infrastructure

Collection systems should be in place before you start recycling and composting. Begin by identifying areas where containers will need to be placed, removed, or consolidated, including outdoor areas. However you choose to collect recyclables, compostable material, and trash, you should incorporate Vermont's standardized recycling symbols into your containers, as well as labels, signage, and posters.

Recycling. By law, schools must provide a recycling container wherever there is a trash can (except for bathrooms). Consider removing extra trash cans that are not in use. Make sure each recycling and trash container is clearly labeled for its intended use.

Cafeteria Sort Stations. Many schools set up a sort station in the cafeteria where students, faculty, and staff can easily and conveniently separate recycling, compostable materials, and trash into buckets or bins. Here are suggestions for sort station design:

- Limit stations to one or two, but no more to help streamline proper separations.
- Minimize other options. Remove excess trash bins from around the cafeteria.
- Proper station height. For younger children, make sure the sort station or bins are at a low height so they can easily reach and see into the bins.
- Provide a working surface. The station should have a place where students can place their tray as they are sorting through their recycling, compost, and trash.
- Place trash last on the sorting station to encourage students to recycle and compost rather than simply dumping everything into the trash.

Reduce Disposables

- Eliminate straws or restrict their use.
- Use bulk condiments such as ketchup pumps.
- Offer buffet items that allow students to choose what they would like to eat.
- Hold a community silverware drive.
- Use magnetized trash can lids to prevent metal utensils from being lost.

Compost In The Classroom. Many schools utilize small buckets with fitted lids in each classroom for snack, breakfast, and lunch food scraps. The buckets are emptied daily by student volunteers and washed in the cafeteria dishwasher. The teacher's lounge should also have containers to capture food scraps as well as coffee grounds.

5. Training, Educating, & Launching Program

Schools that regularly train students, faculty, and staff have better success with their programs. There is less confusion about what is recyclable and compostable, resulting in less trash contamination in recycling and compost containers.

- Talk to students and staff about the importance of sustainability and minimizing waste.
- Training tends to be more effective at communicating the message when conducted in smaller groups. Conduct trainings class-by-class or in assemblies by grade.

Notify the whole school, district, and surrounding community about the program before it starts through announcements, staff meetings, PTO meetings, press releases, display messages, assemblies, and presentations.

6. Program Management & Sustainability

Check-in after your program is launched and had time to operate for a few months, reconvene the initial stakeholder committee or team to discuss what is working, gather feedback, and make adjustments to the program.

Maintaining a school recycling program often requires a champion or team that continually tracks and evaluates progress, keeps up with training and education at all levels (to new students and staff), ensures that program goals are continually met, and troubleshoots issues that may arise.

- Make the program part of the curriculum. Create class projects and experiments around the program. Conduct field trips to the landfill, local transfer station, recycling material recovery facilities, farms or composters. Utilize home style compost bins as demonstration projects that complement a school garden system.
- Plan for continual training to new and returning students and faculty at the beginning of each year.
- Track and report on the success of the program annually through school newsletters, announcements, and trainings.
- Celebrate success! Hold a celebration party to reward the school for their recycling efforts.