OhioEPA

State of Ohio
Environmental Protection Agency

Fact Sheet

Managing Ohio's Solid Waste: Reduction, Recycling & Disposal

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Managing Ohio's solid waste means planning for the future, both at the state and local levels. Ohio EPA and county governments have made a commitment to address solid waste issues that will affect us now and in the future.

It is Ohio EPA's responsibility to ensure Ohio's solid waste needs are addressed. With stronger laws and increased local involvement, solid waste management in Ohio has reached a new level.

Ohio's Solid Waste Law

House Bill 592 (H.B. 592), passed in June 1988, strengthened Ohio's 20-year-old solid waste law significantly. Responsibility for solid waste planning was spread among state and local governments.

H.B. 592 was created to:

- Remedy the poor operating history of some landfills;
- Strengthen local enforcement of health boards;
- Address contamination of ground water;
- Address methane gas migration;
- Increase public participation in the siting process;
- Address the lack of planning for needed disposal capacity; and
- Promote statewide waste reduction and recycling.

The Role of the State Plan

H.B. 592 requires Ohio EPA to adopt a state solid waste management plan and revise it every three years if necessary. The first plan was adopted in 1989; a revised plan was adopted in 1995. One of the goals of the 1989 plan was a 25 percent reduction in total waste generation. In 1994, we had achieved a statewide rate of 35 percent total reduction and recycling.

The primary goal of a state plan is to reduce reliance on landfills and ensure adequate capacity. The 1995 plan calls for a 50 percent reduction in the total generation of solid waste statewide by the year 2000 by reaching two objectives:

1. Reduce, reuse, recycle or minimize 25 percent of the generation of municipal solid wastes; and

2. Reduce or recycle 50 percent of the generation of industrial solid wastes.

Although there always will be a need for landfills, the state plan encourages alternate management methods. In 1994, there were 247 curbside recycling programs throughout the state. This number can only increase as more communities realize the benefits of recycling.

The state plan also includes general criteria for locating solid waste facilities and management strategies for different materials.

Local Planning

As part of the local responsibility requirements of H.B. 592, all Ohio counties were required to form single or joint solid waste management districts. Currently, there are 52 districts incorporating all 88 counties.

Each solid waste management district must develop a 10-year plan to manage local solid waste; the plan must meet or exceed the goals of the state plan and must be updated every three years.

Modern Standards for Solid Waste Landfills

Ohio EPA implemented H.B. 592 by adopting rules that require all landfills in Ohio—existing and future ones—to incorporate "best available technology," which will bring the facility in line with current siting, design, operating, closure and post-closure standards. The rules also require owners to provide proof of financial responsibility to ensure adequate funds to cover post-closure costs.

Landfill regulations, although more stringent, have made the process of siting landfills more well-defined and more understandable to everyone.

Managing Different Materials

Ohio EPA has developed additional rules that include standards for scrap tire storage and disposal, restrictions on yard waste in landfills, and licensing requirements for construction and demolition debris facilities.

Scrap Tires

Every year, 10 to 12 million scrap tires are generated by Ohio citizens. Many of these tires eventually wind up in large scrap tire stockpiles, abandoned in warehouses, or dumped along roadsides in rural areas. These scrap tires are a serious environmental and public health threat because of the potential for fire and because tires hold water that serves as an ideal breeding ground for disease-carrying mosquitoes.

Senate Bill 165, passed in 1993, required Ohio EPA to draft rules regulating scrap tires. This comprehensive regulatory

program governs the transportation, collection, storage, recycling and disposal of scrap tires.

Yard Waste

Yard waste is vegetative waste resulting from care and maintenance of landscaped areas, lawns and gardens. Yard waste rules became effective February 1, 1995. The rules prohibit landfills from accepting source-separated yard waste, unless alternatives are not readily available. Source-separated yard waste is collected separately from other solid wastes, such as household garbage.

Some communities already require residents to source-separate yard waste from general trash; others do not. Ohio EPA strongly encourages backyard composting as a fairly easy and inexpensive way to handle yard waste from your own property.

Construction and Demolition Debris

Construction and demolition debris (CDD) results from the alteration, construction, destruction or repair of manmade physical structures, such as houses, buildings or roadways. CDD facilities are now regulated by rules that are effective September 30, 1996. These rules require that all CDD facilities submit a license application by March 31, 1997.

The new requirements also regulate siting criteria, design and construction, operation, and final closure. Like solid waste disposal facility owners, CDD owners must provide documentation that they have enough money to pay for final closure.

Increased Competition Means Lower Prices

The cost of solid waste disposal in Ohio in 1994 rose slightly to $28.94 per ton, up from $27.05 per ton in 1993. In part, this is due to state and local fees and the cost for landfills to comply with new regulations. Although statewide averages have gone up, there is increased competition for waste among solid waste disposal facilities, which helps keep consumers' costs lower.

State fees collected from solid waste disposal companies help fund cleanups at hazardous waste sites all over Ohio. Many of the sites were once solid waste landfills and open dumps.

Higher costs for ensuring proper disposal are preferable to the alternative—illegal open dumping or disposal in old landfills not designed to protect the environment and public health.

For More Information

Ohio EPA's Public Interest Center has several publications and fact sheets about solid waste.

Call (614) 644-2160 to request publications on particular solid waste subjects such as CDD, yard waste, composting, scrap tires, local solid waste planning, and the 1995 Revised State Solid Waste Management Plan.

Call the Division of Solid and Infectious Waste at (614) 644-2621 with other solid waste questions.