

## Act 148 Universal Recycling Law

### Overview

With the passage of the Universal Recycling law, Vermont has taken an ambitious step towards reducing the amount of materials that end up in the landfill. Mandatory recycling will require that the same materials can be recycled across the state and will be collected alongside trash. This will allow all Vermonters the opportunity to recycle instead of sending valuable materials to the landfill.

### Why was the law needed?

Vermonters are recycling only half of the materials they could be recycling. These materials are valuable and should not be wasted. Throwing out recyclables, food scraps, and leaf and yard debris is a waste of money and shared resources.



### What are the benefits of the law?

- ✓ Creates 'green' jobs
- ✓ Supports the local food system
- ✓ Fosters stronger community connections
- ✓ Lowers Vermont's greenhouse gas emissions (estimated 38% improvement)
- ✓ Increases recycling (estimated increase from 33% to 60%) and reduces the need for landfills
- ✓ More recycling conserves resources and reduces energy consumption

### What does the law do?

Universal Recycling provides consistent and convenient collection services across the state. Over the next seven years, it will become illegal to throw away mandated recyclables, leaf and yard debris, clean wood scraps, and food scraps everywhere in Vermont. The law is phased in by material and generator type and allows time for the services and infrastructure to be developed over the next seven years. The full extent of the law will be in effect by 2020.

### What materials are being banned from the landfill<sup>1</sup>?

- ✓ Mandated recyclables:
  - Aluminum and steel cans
  - Aluminum foil and aluminum pie pans
  - Glass bottles and jars from foods and beverages
  - PET and HDPE plastic bottles and jugs
  - Corrugated cardboard
  - White and mixed paper
  - Newspaper, magazines, catalogues, paper mail, and envelopes
  - Box board
  - Paper bags
- ✓ Leaf/yard debris and clean wood debris
- ✓ Food scraps



*continued* ►

<sup>1</sup> Other materials are already banned from the landfill in Vermont; this list is not a comprehensive list of the statewide landfill ban. Additionally, many districts already mandate recycling of these and other materials.

## What collection services will be required by the law?



- ✓ Facilities that offer trash services must also provide services for managing:
  - Mandated recyclables by 2014
  - Leaf and yard debris by 2015
  - Food scraps by 2017
- ✓ Trash haulers that offer curbside service, must also provide services for:
  - Mandated recyclables by 2015
  - Leaf and yard debris by 2016
  - Food scraps by 2017
- ✓ Facilities and haulers cannot charge a separate fee for collecting mandated recyclables.

## What is the timeline of the law for residents<sup>2</sup>?

- ✓ July 1, 2015: Mandated recyclables (listed above) are banned from landfill
- ✓ July 1, 2016: Leaf and yard debris and clean wood are banned from landfill
- ✓ July 1, 2020: Food scraps are banned from landfill
- ✓ Large generators of these materials, such as food processors and restaurants, will be banned from sending these materials to the landfill sooner, beginning with the largest producers in 2014. (See the website listed at the bottom of the page for more details.)

## What is the food scrap reduction hierarchy?

Universal Recycling includes a hierarchy for managing food scraps and other organics:

1. Reduce waste with strategies including planned shopping lists and improved storage methods
2. Donate to food rescue organizations
3. Divert food scraps for agricultural uses, such as feeding animals\*
4. Compost or process in anaerobic digesters
5. Recover for energy



\* See VT Agency of Agriculture Policy on Swine Feeding:

<http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/wastediv/solid/documents/SwineFeedingPolicy.pdf>

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### **For more information, visit our website or contact:**

Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation  
Waste Management & Prevention Division  
Solid Waste Program  
1 National Life Drive, Davis 1  
Montpelier VT 05620-3704  
802-828-1138



For a complete list of recycling requirements and landfill bans where you live or do business, contact your local solid waste management entity. Contact information is available here:

<http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/wastediv/solid/swmdlist.htm>

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<sup>2</sup> Some of these materials are already banned from the landfill in some districts.

<http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/wastediv/solid/Act148.htm>

9/2013