

Fact Sheet: Landfills 101

What are the different types of landfills?

Mixed municipal waste

Demolition and construction debris

Hazardous waste

Note: Many types of waste are often accepted at a single disposal area.

How many landfills are in California?

178 active, permitted non-hazardous waste landfills and 9 active landfills that are not permitted.

188 active, permitted transfer stations

41 active, permitted Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs)

Landfills get permitted by meeting the specifications of both the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) and Local Enforcement Agencies (LEAs). Non-permitted landfills do exist; they have a designated amount of time to meet specifications.

(from CIWMB data specialist, Donnaye Palmer)

Who typically owns landfills?

The actual land where waste is disposed and the operations of the business are not necessarily owned by the same company or governing body.

Of the 178 active, permitted landfills in CA:

120 are publicly owned by various public institutions including city, county, district, state, federal and military governing bodies.

58 landfills are operated by private companies.

Who regulates them?

In 1991, the US EPA published the RCRA Subtitle D program, intended to encourage more environmentally sound practices toward municipal solid waste, such as source reduction and recycling programs as well as strict guidelines for landfills. The role of the EPA defined in the Subtitle D program is to set rules and guidelines for disposal facilities and to empower and guide local and state governments toward a cost-effective and environmentally protective system of managing municipal solid waste. Since this amendment to RCRA was passed, hundreds of landfills have been forced to shut down in California. Others, under the close supervision of local and state agencies are rushing to get their sites permitted under Subtitle D.

Non-hazardous

Non-hazardous landfills are primarily regulated by Local Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), but also work closely with the Environmental Protection Agency (division, section, board?) California Integrated Waste Management Board. The LEAs are usually a

particular office of the county where the landfill is located. In California, these offices are either the Counties' Environmental Health Department or the Bureau of Environmental Health Services.

Hazardous

The Hazardous Waste Management Program (HWMP) regulates hazardous waste through its permitting, compliance assurance and Unified Program activities. HWMP maintains the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) authorization to implement the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) program in California, and develops regulations, policies, guidance and technical assistance/training to assure the safe storage, treatment, transportation and disposal of hazardous wastes. (from <http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/hwmp>)

Who has the authority to ban products from landfills?

Essentially, a product ban from CA landfills could be authorized by any of the bodies involved in the operating, owning or monitoring of the landfill. That means the owner, a private company, a municipal governing body, state or even the federal government could order a ban.

What is a transfer station and who typically owns these?

This is a plot of land where haulers bring waste that will not remain there for an extended period of time. The transfer station consolidates materials and reduces the number of trips made to the landfill. Transfer stations are owned and operated in much the same manner as landfills, with similar ratios. Often, one entity owns the land and another operates the business.

Can products be banned from transfer stations?

Transfer stations are governed under the same federal, state and local policies as landfills. Therefore, the same entities which can ban products from landfills, can ban products from transfer stations.

What type of products are generally banned from landfills?

In California, the current state-wide bans include the following:

- Latex paint
- white goods (refrigerators, washers and dryers etc.)
- autos
- recyclable material
- lead-acid batteries
- household batteries
- adhesives
- auto products such as anti-freeze and transmission fluid
- cleaners
- pesticides
- mercury
- solvents
- used oil
- whole tires

(from <http://www.residua.com/Landfill-IS.html>)

