

# Environmental Programs

## Solid Waste Regulations

### Solid Waste Regulations: Rules for Managing Yukon Garbage

In January 2000, the Yukon government introduced the Solid Waste Regulations under the *Environment Act*. Because waste disposal facilities (commonly called “dumps” or “landfills”) have the potential to impact human health and the natural environment, operators must meet a number of requirements for constructing, operating, monitoring, and closing these sites. These requirements and standards are put in place through permits issued under the Solid Waste Regulations to operators of:

- *Waste Disposal Facilities* that dispose of garbage generated by the public; and
- *Commercial Dumps* that dispose of garbage generated by commercial activities.

#### What is “Solid Waste” and Where Does It Go?

Solid waste is the everyday garbage that goes to the local dump. It can come from homes, businesses, institutions, or industrial sites, and includes waste from both the demolition and construction of buildings. It does not include special (hazardous) waste, or sewage, which are subject to more stringent handling requirements.

Most solid waste is deposited in one of the 30 public waste disposal facilities located near all Yukon communities. The municipalities of Carmacks, Dawson, Haines Junction, Faro, Mayo, Teslin, Watson Lake and Whitehorse manage the sites in their communities and the Yukon government manages the rest.

#### What Is Done With Solid Waste in Yukon?

Public waste disposal facilities and commercial dumps manage the solid waste at their sites by burning it, burying it, or transferring it to another site for final disposal. There are different requirements in the solid waste permits issued for each site which govern how facility operators can use each of these management methods.

*Public Waste Disposal Facilities* are required to develop a 10-year Solid Waste Management Plan describing in detail their design, construction, operation, upgrading, closure and post-closure plans. Municipalities and the Department of Community Services were required to submit their first 10-year Solid Waste Management Plan before March 31, 2003 and will be required to submit their next plans in 2012 covering the period from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2023.

*Commercial Dumps* are not required to submit a Solid Waste Management Plan but still must submit various smaller plans – for example, plans to construct new cells – under their solid waste permits.

## Burning

The *Solid Waste Regulations* do not prohibit the burning or incineration of solid waste. In large part this is because when the Yukon government originally consulted on the draft *Solid Waste Regulations* prior to 2000, restrictions on burning garbage were not desired by the majority of those expressing an opinion. Open burning, however, is not recommended and should be considered only as a last resort. In recognition of our evolving awareness of the human health and environmental effects of burning garbage, public waste disposal facility operators are currently working towards phasing out open burning entirely, and are exploring other options for waste disposal. For example, a number of facilities that used to open burn garbage are now operating as transfer stations.

Facilities that burn or incinerate garbage must first obtain an air emissions permit under the *Environment Act*. This permit is combined with the solid waste permit and sets additional conditions related to when, how and under what circumstances burning should be conducted.

## Littering

It is illegal to litter, to throw trash from your vehicle or allow it to be blown out of the vehicle. Help keep the Yukon clean – dispose of your garbage properly!

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**For more information on the Solid Waste Regulations, please contact:**

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