



Solid Waste Transfer Stations

Office of Land Quality

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Description:

- Solid waste transfer stations are facilities where solid waste, mainly municipal solid waste (MSW), is unloaded from collection vehicles or containers for reloading into larger, long-distance vehicles for transport to landfills or other permitted solid waste facilities for final disposal. Facilities that move solid waste from one mode of transportation to another, such as rail to road, can also be considered transfer stations.
- At many transfer stations, workers screen incoming waste to recover recyclables or materials inappropriate for disposal at a solid waste landfill, such as large appliances, tires, automobile batteries, and similar items.
- MSW that quickly decomposes, such as food waste, must be removed from a transfer station by the next day. Recyclables may be stored in containers for a longer period of time.
- Combining several truck loads of waste into a single shipment reduces trips to and from the disposal site, saving communities money on labor and transportation.
- Transfer stations may be publicly or privately owned. Transfer station owners and operators must have a solid waste facility permit from IDEM, as well as any required local land use permits, before constructing and operating a transfer station.
- Transfer station operators must prevent contamination from leaving the site. To do this, modern transfer stations must transfer waste inside an enclosed building with concrete floors and a waste water collection system.
- In addition to MSW, which includes both household and office wastes, transfer stations can receive construction/demolition waste, industrial process waste, containerized pollution control waste, and other wastes allowed by the facility permit. Transfer stations cannot accept other wastes, including hazardous waste, infectious waste, and other wastes listed in the Indiana Administrative Code at 329 IAC 11-13.5-13(b).

Environmental Impacts:

- Transfer stations make solid waste collection more efficient and reduce overall transportation costs, air emissions, energy use, truck traffic, and road wear and tear.
- Modern transfer stations designed to collect wastewater, control spills, and minimize blowing litter, odor, and dust have a minimal impact on the environment.
- Transfer station operators must monitor the facility grounds for blowing litter, dust, spills, and the presence of vectors such as rodents, insects or birds.
- Once a transfer station is permanently closed, operators must remove all waste and residue from the facility and ensure no dumping occurs once the facility is closed.

IDEM's Role:

- The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) is responsible for protecting human health and the environment while providing for safe industrial, agricultural, commercial, and governmental operations vital to a prosperous economy.
- IDEM's Office of Land Quality (OLQ) regulates Indiana's solid waste landfills, processing facilities and transfer stations, and works with solid waste management districts on local waste management and recycling programs.

- The Solid Waste Permits Section in OLQ reviews solid waste facility permit applications, determining whether they are in compliance with solid waste regulations, and issues final decisions for new facilities, as well as modifications, and expansions at existing facilities.
- The Solid Waste and Industrial Compliance Sections in OLQ inspect both active and closed solid waste facilities.

Citizen's Role:

- There are a number of ways every citizen can participate in transfer station permitting and planning:
 - Communicate:
 - Contact authorities that plan, permit, and regulate waste transfer stations, such as local zoning boards, planning commissions, and the local solid waste management district.
 - Talk to the waste transfer station developer and communicate your concerns or ideas as early in the process as possible.
 - Submit comments to IDEM during its public comment period on draft permits, which lasts at least 30 days.
 - Participate in developing local planning and zoning ordinances for land use requirements:
 - Attend public information meetings, hearings, and decision meetings to express your interests.
 - Request a visit to the developer's completed and operating waste transfer stations, if available.

More Information:

- For more information on solid waste permitting, visit IDEM's Office of Land Quality website at www.IN.gov/idem/4222.htm.
- For more information on solid waste, solid waste facility compliance and reporting requirements, and services, visit IDEM's Office of Land Quality Compliance website at www.IN.gov/idem/4998.htm.
- For a list of permitted solid waste facilities in Indiana, visit IDEM's Office of Land Quality website at www.IN.gov/idem/4862.htm.
- For public documents related to a facility in your community, visit IDEM's Virtual File Cabinet at www.in.gov/idem/6551.htm.
- For additional information on solid waste management, visit the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (U.S. EPA) website at www.epa.gov/epawaste.
- For a guide on citizen involvement in the planning of waste transfer stations, visit U.S. EPA's website at www.epa.gov/osw/hazard/tsd/permit/pubpart/.