

Universal Recycling

Summary Sheet



Why is the law needed?

Waste diversion rates have stagnated in Vermont between 30 to 36% over the past 10 years. A significant portion of the waste stream that is disposed is composed of recyclable items, leaf and yard debris, and food scraps that could be diverted from landfills and put to better use. In addition, landfilling these materials (especially food scraps) contributes to climate change by producing greenhouse gas emission. Recyclable materials, food scraps, and leaf and yard debris are all valuable resources that should not be thrown away. Finally, landfill space in Vermont is limited and one of the two major landfills is nearing its capacity.

What is the goal of Universal Recycling?

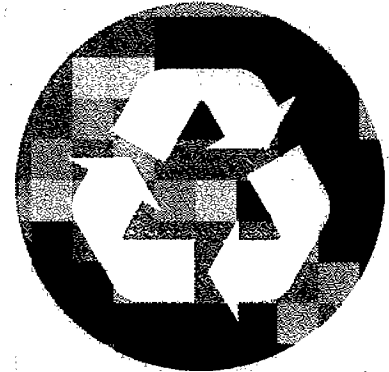
The goal of Universal Recycling is to improve the capture and diversion rates for these valuable materials to prevent them from being landfilled. When the law takes full effect more materials will be diverted from the landfill. It has been demonstrated that recycling materials conserves resources while reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. The bans established by Act 148 send clear signals to both the private and public sector that materials will be available, which provides an incentive to invest in infrastructure needed to meet the demand.

What does the Universal Recycling law do?

This law will provide convenience and choices to Vermont residents and businesses, and it will lead to more consistent statewide solid waste services such as recycling and composting. By requiring separation and diversion of materials it creates an incentive for investment into materials management strategies. It also allows for time to establish collection and facilities for managing recyclables and food, leaf, and yard materials. In summary the law:

- **Bans disposal of certain solid waste from landfills including:**

- Recyclables by July 1, 2015 including:
 - Aluminum and steel cans
 - Aluminum foil and aluminum pie pans
 - Glass bottles and jars from food and beverages
 - PET and HDPE plastic containers, bottles and jugs
 - Corrugated cardboard
 - White and mixed paper
 - Newspaper, magazines, paper mail, and envelopes
 - Box board
 - Paper bags
- Leaf and yard debris and clean wood waste by July 1, 2016, and
- Food scraps by 2020, initiated in phases (see below).



- **Requires parallel collection at facilities:** Facility owners that offer trash collection must also offer collection of:

- Recyclables by July 1, 2014,
- Leaf and yard debris by July 1, 2015, and
- Food scraps by July 1, 2017.

Facilities cannot charge a separate fee for the collection of residential recyclables, but can charge commercial haulers for collection of recyclables. The costs of collecting recyclables from residents can be included in trash collection fees. Facilities can charge for the collection of leaf and yard debris and food scraps.

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Universal Recycling TIMELINE

**JULY 1
2014**

- » Transfer stations/Drop-off Facilities must accept residential recyclables at no extra charge
- » Food scrap generators of 104 tons/year (2 tons/week) must divert material to any certified facility within 20 miles

**JULY 1
2015**

- » Statewide unit based pricing takes effect, requiring residential trash charges be based on volume or weight
- » Recyclables are banned from the landfill
- » Transfer stations/Drop-off Facilities must accept leaf and yard debris
- » Haulers must offer residential recycling collection at no extra charge
- » Public buildings must provide recycling containers alongside all trash containers in public spaces (exception for restrooms)
- » Food scrap generators of 52 tons/year (1 ton/week) must divert material to any certified facility within 20 miles

**JULY 1
2016**

- » Leaf, yard, and clean wood debris are banned from the landfill
- » Haulers must offer leaf and yard debris collection
- » Food scrap generators of 26 tons/year (1/2 ton/week) must divert material to any certified facility within 20 miles

**JULY 1
2017**

- » Transfer stations/Drop-off Facilities must accept food scraps
- » Haulers must offer food scrap collection
- » Food scrap generators of 18 tons/year (1/3 ton/week) must divert material to any certified facility within 20 miles

**JULY 1
2020**

- » Food scraps are banned from the landfill