

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Environmental Protection Division

Solid Waste Management Program

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TRANSFER STATION GUIDANCE

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The purpose of this guidance document is to clarify Rule 391-3-4-.06 as it relates to the operation of solid waste transfer stations.

Solid Waste Transfer Stations are regulated by the Rules for Solid Waste Management, Chapter 391-3-4. Below is the Rule .06 as it applies to transfer station operations.

391-3-4-.06 Permit by Rule for Collection, Transportation, Processing, and Disposal. Amended.

(1) Permit-by-Rule. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Rules, collection operations, transfer station operations, inert waste landfill operations, waste processing and thermal treatment operations, and wastewater treatment and pretreatment plant sludge disposal operations shall be deemed to have a solid waste handling permit if the conditions in paragraph (2) are met and the conditions in paragraph (3), for that particular category of operation are met.

(2) Notification. Within 30 days of commencing solid waste handling activities which are covered under a permit-by-Rule, notification must be made to the Director of such activity. Notification shall be made on such forms as are provided by the Director. Persons failing to notify the Director of such activities shall be deemed to be operating without a permit.

(3) Categories of Operations:

(b) Transfer Station Operations:

1. Solid Waste shall be confined to the interior of transfer stations, and not allowed to scatter to the outside. Waste shall not be allowed to accumulate, and floors shall be kept clean and well drained.

2. Sewage solids shall be excluded from transfer stations.

3. Dust, odors and similar conditions resulting from transfer operations shall be controlled at all times.

4. Rodents, insects and other such pests shall be controlled.

5. Any contaminated runoff from washwater shall be discharged to a wastewater treatment system and, before final release, shall be treated in a manner approved by the Division.

6. Hazardous Waste: no person owning or operating a transfer station shall cause, suffer, allow, or permit the handling of regulated quantities of hazardous waste.

7. Liquid wastes restricted from landfill disposal by Rule 391-3-4-.04(9) shall be excluded from transfer stations. Transfer stations in existence on August 1, 2004 and in compliance with all other regulations applicable to permit by rule transfer stations may continue to handle such liquid wastes until a solid waste processing facility permit is issued or August 1, 2006, whichever occurs first.

The siting of transfer station operations are subject to local zoning and land use regulations. As such transfer stations may be located in or near residential areas. The transfer station operator should be sensitive to the fact that this is a solid waste handling facility and continuously monitor the operation and minimize the impact the operation may have on the surrounding community.

The following are some commonly asked questions and answers with regard to transfer station operation. These questions and answers are not intended to be new rules but attempts to clarify for both operators and regulators what is meant by the Rule. This guidance is directed towards municipal solid waste and construction/demolition waste transfer stations. It is not intended to include other transfer stations that may handle other types of waste including biomedical waste.

Who must comply with 391-3-4-.06 with regard to the transfer of solid waste?

Any owner and or operator of a facility as defined in Rule 391-3-4-.06 that is used to transfer solid waste from a collection vehicle to another vehicle for transportation to a permitted disposal facility or processing operation must comply with this rule.

Are convenience centers transfer stations?

No. A convenience center's primary function is to collect waste from individuals, not collection vehicles for transportation to a permitted solid waste handling facility.

Can construction/demolition waste transfer take place outside a building?

No. All solid waste transfer operations must take place in an enclosed structure.

What is an "enclosed structure"?

Enclosed structure means a building consisting of an impermeable floor, roof and at least three walls that are capable of confining all solid waste to the building. The building must be constructed to prevent precipitation from reaching solid waste inside the structure. The building must be constructed and oriented in such a manner as to contain waste inside the building and control litter, liquid runoff, vectors and odors. All solid waste unloading and loading must take place inside the building. Solid waste shall not be dumped or allowed to scatter outside the building.

What does “waste not allowed to accumulate mean”?

For municipal solid waste transfer stations it means that waste must be continuously removed from the tipping floor during the operating day for transportation to the solid waste handling facility. At some point during each operating day all municipal solid waste must be removed from the tipping floor and the floor cleaned. Waste remaining on the tipping floor overnight must not cause odors or attract rodents, flies or other vectors. Transfer Stations that receive only construction/demolition waste may store waste inside the transfer station for up to a one-week period.

What does “floors shall be kept clean mean”?

Floors for municipal solid waste transfer operations should, at a minimum, be scraped clean at some point during the working day. Periodic cleaning with pressure washers or other such devices may be necessary to control odors and vectors. At some time during each day all parts of the floor will be cleaned. This assumes that cleaning is an ongoing process during operating hours, and that as waste is moved from one area to another or from the floor to the truck, the cleared area will be scraped clean. Any solid waste remaining on the floor of the transfer station shall be concentrated to the smallest possible area.

Can solid waste remain in the transfer station overnight?

Solid waste may remain on the tipping floor after operating hours if the practice does not create odor or vector problems. Transfer Stations that receive segregated construction/demolition (C&D) waste may store that C&D waste inside the transfer station for up to a one-week period.

Can trucks loaded with solid waste remain at the transfer station overnight?

Trucks loaded with solid waste and covered with mesh tarps may remain overnight if parked inside the enclosed structure. Loaded trucks may remain on transfer station property if they are completely enclosed or if covered with impervious tarps and are substantially leak proof. Care must be taken to insure that this practice does not result in creating vector or odor problems or in causing contaminated runoff from leaking trucks.

What are the approved methods for liquid waste disposal from transfer stations?

All liquids generated from acceptable solid waste or from floor cleaning operations inside the transfer station building should be collected and discharged to a permitted wastewater treatment system.

As an acceptable alternative, holding tanks may be used to collect liquids generated at solid waste transfer stations. The contents of the tanks must be periodically pumped out and transported to an EPD permitted wastewater treatment facility. The tank must be sealed and there must be no openings other than the access opening for pumping the contents of the holding tank. The access opening must be located hydraulically higher than the wash down area that it serves. A routine pumping schedule must be followed with all contents transported in a leak proof vehicle to an EPD permitted wastewater treatment facility. Manifests documenting proper liquid disposal will be utilized and records of those manifests maintained at the transfer station facility and available for EPD review during solid waste inspections for a minimum three-year period.

Liquid waste cannot be disposed of in a septic tank /drain field system unless the appropriate permit for an Underground Injection System is secured from EPD's Geologic Survey Branch.

Is a transfer station required to have an Industrial Storm Water General Permit?

Storm water runoff from the areas outside of most transfer station buildings may be required to be covered under an Industrial Storm Water General Permit. There may be unique operations that qualify for the conditional exclusion from storm water permitting based on "no exposure" of industrial activities to storm water. Transfer station owners should coordinate this permitting activity with EPD's Non-Point Source Program at (404) 675-6240.

Can separate waste streams be handled in one building?

Yes, as long as the waste is delivered and kept separate until transported. Any co-mingled waste must be handled as municipal solid waste.

Can recycling take place in a transfer station?

Recycling may only take place at transfer stations where separate recycling containers have been placed in or around the transfer station for individuals to place previously sorted recyclables. No processing or sorting of recyclables may occur at transfer stations under the permit by rule. Any sorting or processing of solid waste requires a solid waste-handling permit for a materials recovery facility. Routine removal of unacceptable waste from the solid waste stream is not considered to be recycling.

Is an odor control system necessary for every transfer station?

No, not for every transfer station. Odors must be controlled if the odors create a public nuisance. A transfer station operator must monitor their waste stream and operation and anticipate the need for an odor control system. Waste types, volume and cleanliness of the transfer station all play a part in effective odor control.

Can sewage treatment plant sludge be handled in a transfer station?

No. Current rules prohibit handling of sewage solids at transfer stations.

DEFINITIONS

"Clean" as it relates to "floors shall be kept clean" means free of dirt and grime sufficient to attract rodents and/or flies and to cause odors.

"Collection Vehicle" means a commercial or governmentally owned truck and/or trailer used to collect waste from one or more locations and transport the collected wastes to a solid waste disposal, transfer or processing facility. Collection vehicle does not include personally owned vehicles used by individuals to transport their own wastes.

"Convenience Center" means a facility consisting of one or more solid waste and/or recycling containers where individuals may deposit their waste for management at another location.

“Enclosed Structure,” means a building consisting of an impermeable floor, roof and at least three walls that are capable of confining all solid waste to the building. The building must be constructed to minimize the amount of precipitation reaching solid waste inside the structure. The building must be constructed and oriented in such a manner as to contain waste inside the building and control litter, liquid runoff, vectors and odors

“Individual” means a private citizen that transports their solid waste to a permitted solid waste handling facility.

"Transfer Station" means a facility used to transfer solid waste from one transportation (collection) vehicle to another for transportation to a solid waste disposal facility or processing operation. A Transfer Station includes the enclosed waste management structure (tipping floor and loading bays) and ancillary buildings and equipment, including but not limited to, scale house, scales, truck/equipment maintenance/fueling areas, and transport truck staging areas. A convenience center whose primary function is to collect waste from individuals is not a transfer station.

“Transportation Vehicle” means any vehicle, including but not limited to, trucks, transfer trailers, barges, or railcars that are used to move solid waste from a transfer station to a permitted solid waste handling facility or to another transfer station.

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