

State Materials Ban

Alexis Baker, Environmental Programs Coordinator

State environmental officials encourage North Carolina residents to do their part to keep motor oil filters, wooden pallets, and plastic bottles out of landfills. On October 1, 2009, these items will be banned from solid waste disposal in North Carolina and should be recycled. Items currently banned from disposal include used oil, lead-acid batteries, aluminum cans, whole scrap tires, alcoholic beverage containers, antifreeze, and appliances.

The current and upcoming bans recognize that recycling these materials will help North Carolina reach its environmental and economic development goals. North Carolina is home to a wide range of companies that collect, process, and recycle the banned materials back into usable products. By reclaiming these materials, local jobs are created and pollutants are cut back.

Enforcement of the disposal bans will chiefly be applied at disposal facilities such as landfills and transfer stations by the N.C. Division of Waste Management. It is unlikely that enforcement will take place at individual businesses or other generating facilities. Depending on the type of violator and the severity of the violation, the Division of Waste Management may, at its discretion, assess a range of administrative and/or civil penalties for violation of the disposal bans. The law does allow for accidental or occasional disposal of small amounts of banned materials. Starting a recycling program for the banned materials is the simplest and easiest way to ensure compliance.

The disposal bans will also reinforce the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources's (DENR) "2 Million Tons by 2012" goal, announced in 2008. The 2 Million Tons by 2012 challenges local governments to improve the performance of their recycling programs to achieve an annual recovery rate of two million tons of recycling.

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