

# Solid Waste Convenience Center Workshop

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# What are Solid Waste Convenience Centers?

Local waste management facilities that:

- serve a specific geographic area or jurisdiction,
- vary considerably in the services provided and operational methods utilized,
- are funded variously by fees and/or taxes,
- are presently not regulated by the state,
- are a component of the local governmental waste management infrastructure (typically a county).



# Why Convenience Centers are Important

- Might be the only government waste service provided locally, especially in rural areas
- Provide a core local service
- Puts citizen in control of personal waste management
- Reduces illegal dumping
- Often multiple services provided in one location
- Good value service for cost in most cases



## Why Convenience Centers are Important

- Can provide recycling options for communities, especially in more rural settings
- Usually cheaper than curbside subscription service
- Use seems free if paid thru property taxes
- Highly visible public service and an opportunity for local government to interact in a positive way with citizens
- They are convenient!



## Variety is the rule

- Only garbage/only recyclables; full service/limited services
- Staffed/unstaffed
- Limited hours of operation/expanded hours of operation (7 days/week)
- Government owned/privately owned (seldom)
- Government operated with government personnel/government owned with contracted operations/privately operated
- Towns can have them as well as counties (although counties have most)
- Little over ½ of counties in North Carolina have convenience centers of some kind; some counties only one/some several (up to 17)
- Some on owned land/some on leased property or combination
- Some are eye sores/ some are attractive, clean, modern and well maintained

# Variety is the rule

- Some use compactors; some use front load dumpsters, roll-off containers, or other type bulk uncompact containers
- Some financed as part of enterprise fund/most general fund financed/ some charge gate/user fees
  - most do not charge fees at the site; very few take bank or credit cards; some take prepaid cards, stickers or bags – PAYT; some actually handle cash
- Some allow small commercial customers/most restrict to residential wastes
- Some allow use for county-wide residents/some restrict to a specific jurisdiction, township, district, etc.





# Center Attendants

- Attendants/operators are critical to the proper functioning of a convenience center
- Center attendants need training in safety, local center rules and regulations, customer service and how to deal with difficult people
- We require basic first aid and CPR annually for our attendants
- May be contracted/full-time/part-time/or combination; even retirees
- Usually lower paid employees, but can have substantial responsibilities

# Center Attendant Responsibilities

- Need to understand and enforce center rules and guidelines
- Need to understand and enforce center safety rules and guide/spot service vehicles and customer vehicles – traffic control
- Must oversee and maintain proper sortation of materials to keep out prohibited materials or reduce contaminants in recyclables
- Often one of the few government employees citizens meet on a regular basis
  - Should be acknowledged as representing your organization
  - Look professional – clean clothes, safety reflective wear, etc.
  - An identification badge is helpful
- Should have reasonably good communication skills be able to explain rules and deal with difficult people





# Center Attendant Responsibilities

- Must be trustworthy
  - with regard to letting someone do something against rules for money or as a favor
  - if they handle money or maintain records
- Must work outside in varying weather conditions and may be required to lift
- Often work in remote areas with some security concerns (discussed later today)
- Level of daily supervision usually minimal so they should be able to work with considerable independence
- Most help keep site clean, collect litter and cleanup container overflow
- May perform minor site maintenance – paint equipment, mowing, etc. or even pest control
- Communication availability (phone or two-way radio) is important to help ensure safe and efficient operations

# Convenience Center Policies

- Rules or guidelines for attendants/employees
  - Example - Consider approach to scavenging by employees
    - Not Allowed?
    - Allowed? Under what circumstances or limitations?
- Most centers have rules or guidelines for users
  - vary from minimal and informal to written formal rules
- Every site should have a written set of rules that can be referred to by attendant when challenged and available as a handout to users.





# General Policy Guidelines

- Important to establish center attendant/operator authority (empower your operator)
- Declare who is allowed to use center and who is not authorized
- Note acceptable methods to verify user authorization
- Note degree to which attendant is required to assist with lifting
- Establish a handicapped/elderly user policy
- Might include an injury or liability disclaimer by your attorney
- May want to address loitering, solicitation, weapons, pets, children, profane language, etc.
- Provide a phone number and name for referral of complaints, suggestions, etc.



# User Policy Issues

## Customer Screening and User Verification

- Procedures for ensuring those eligible to use the centers are important (if restrictions exist which in most cases they do)
  - For financial reasons (increase tipping fee and hauling costs)
  - For maintaining container capacity and overflow
  - For limiting traffic
- Most centers limit users to residents of the county or other defined areas/jurisdictions.
- Various methods to identify eligible users are:
  - Window decals
  - Rearview mirror hangers
  - Access cards
  - Card or tag kept in glove box
  - Request for driver's license or other document demonstrating residence
  - Visual identification or personal knowledge of attendant
  - Some combination of above
- All methods have shortcomings and may agitate a citizen (and taxpayer) when challenged or confronted or if they've forgotten to bring the hanger or decal – attendant should be diplomatic



# User Policy Issues

## Material Management/Guidelines

(Orange County may have more than most)

- Clearly state rules for recycling and materials separation/sorting
- Landfill bans necessitate center collection & disposal restrictions
- Clearly state what cannot be placed in waste containers
  - Dead animals, banned materials, recyclables, burn barrels, tires, mattresses, etc.
- Cite ordinance (or state law) that applies as source of authority for rules
- Barrels
  - May want special requirements to apply
- HHW
  - Clearly state policy on what is and is not accepted for disposal

# User Policy Issues

## ■ Scavenging

- Clearly state your scavenging policy. If you don't have one, develop one.

## ■ Salvage Sheds/Swap Shops

- These are very popular in Orange County, but the source of some problems that require guidelines. Most convenience centers don't provide this service.

## ■ Traffic

- speed limit or other related rules

## ■ Load/Visit Limits

- clearly state any vehicle or trailer size/type limits
- restrictions on number of visits per day/week
- covering or tarping requirements
- sideboard limitations,
- geographic limitations for source of materials (county, unincorporated, township, residents who don't have curbside collection, etc.)



# User Policy Issues

## Site Signage

- It is important to provide clear and concise signage to guide users
  - To limit questions to attendant
  - To prevent placement of wrong materials in wrong containers
  - To prevent unnecessary lingering or uncertainty at the site as customers to figure out what to do



- Too many or too busy signage is as bad as too little signage.



# Questions or Comments?

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