

What is a Municipal Solid Waste Landfill?

A Municipal Solid Waste Landfill (MSWLF) is a disposal site for solid waste generated by households, which include single and multiple-family residences, hotels and motels, campgrounds, and picnic grounds. MSWLFs also may receive other types of solid waste such as commercial and industrial solid waste.

MSWLFs may be publicly or privately owned and operated. In Idaho, publicly owned landfills are frequently owned and operated by county governments. Privately owned MSWLFs are known as commercial solid waste facilities.

What regulations apply to MSWLFs in Idaho?

MSWLFs must comply with requirements of the Idaho Solid Waste Facilities Act (Idaho Code Title 39, Chapter 74). For the most part, Idaho's requirements mirror federal requirements contained in 40 CFR Part 258.

The law covers six basic areas: location, operation, design, ground water monitoring and corrective action, closure and post-closure care, and financial assurance.

Who manages MSWLFs in Idaho?

Counties, public health districts, and the state (DEQ) are responsible for various stages of solid waste management in the state.

For More Information

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Web Resources

Municipal Solid Waste Landfills in Idaho

www.deq.idaho.gov/mswlf-in-idaho

Idaho Public Health Districts

www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/HealthDistricts/tabid/97/Default.aspx



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Managing Waste in Idaho

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about

Municipal Solid Waste Landfills



Idaho Department of
Environmental Quality
www.deq.idaho.gov



Site Selection

Who selects potential sites for new or expanded municipal solid waste landfills?

Counties are responsible for selecting sites for new or expanded landfills. DEQ is not involved in selecting landfill locations.

What siting requirements apply?

Siting of MSWLFs is restricted near airports, floodplains, critical habitat areas, wetlands, fault areas and seismic zones, and unstable areas. These restrictions are aimed at deterring interference by birds with aircraft operation, preventing waste from washing out or polluting water quality in a protected area, and ensuring design integrity.

Facility Design

What design requirements apply?

MSWLFs are required to design and construct landfills with a liner and leachate collection system. The purpose of the liner is to keep all liquids within the landfill and prevent contamination of ground water. The leachate collection system is designed to prevent a buildup of the liquid on the liner. The leachate is collected in lined ponds or sent to a wastewater treatment plant.

A ground water monitoring system also must be installed to monitor ground water up gradient and down gradient from the landfill.

The Review Process

Who approves new landfills or expansion of existing landfills?

Several approvals are required before a MSWLF may accept waste.

- The state (DEQ) is responsible for (1) determining whether a new or expanded landfill site meets the siting criteria established by state law and (2) whether its design plan meets state design and ground water monitoring requirements. If the site and design plan meet state criteria and requirements, they will be approved.
- Local public health districts are responsible for determining whether the daily operating plan and the closure/post-closure care plan for a new or expanded landfill meet state requirements. If these plans meet state requirements, they will be approved.

Environmental Factors

How is water quality protected?

Owners and operators of MSWLFs must protect both surface water and ground water. Surface water is protected through siting and storm water run-on and run-off requirements. Ground water is protected through design requirements that require landfills to be lined, have leachate collection systems, and monitor ground water.

How is air quality protected?

To reduce odor, MSWLFs are required to apply a daily cover, typically six inches of dirt or other approved material. Landfills also are required to monitor methane and other gases to ensure levels do not exceed health-based air quality standards. Landfills with emissions that exceed standards are required to install control equipment.

Public Involvement



Citizens are encouraged to participate throughout the review process. Owners and operators of proposed new or expanded MSWLFs are required to publish notice, make all documents available for public review, and solicit public comment at each stage in the review process—from the time the site certification application is submitted to DEQ through review of the daily operation and closure/post-closure plans by the local public health district.

DEQ and the local public health districts review and seriously consider all public comments, with an eye toward assuring protection of public health and the environment.