



Regional District urges responsible use of landfills and transfer stations during COVID-19 crisis

COVID-19 has brought rapid change to our world in many ways. People are mindful about public gatherings. Travel has been restricted. Restaurants and businesses have either closed or developed new ways to serve the public. People are more diligent about washing their hands and staying home when unwell.

One thing that hasn't changed is the amount garbage and recycling that people are generating. Traffic has remained steady over the last month since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared. In March, the Regional District saw an average 120 non-commercial vehicles coming to the landfill each day.

"We know that many people have extra time at home these days and may be thinking of doing a little spring cleaning or finishing home renovation projects," says Laura Zapotichny, Manager of Waste Diversion Program for the Regional District. "Those are great projects, but they can result in additional waste coming to our landfills and transfer stations."

The Regional District is keeping landfills and transfer stations open at this time. Zapotichny says their ability to keep those facilities open depends somewhat on how the public uses the sites.

"We have seen a real shift in how people are using their local grocery stores. They are reducing the number of times they shop, limiting cash transactions and practicing social distancing for the safety of other customers, staff and themselves. We are asking people to adapt that same thinking when it comes to the landfill and transfer stations," says Zapotichny.

To assist in managing volumes of site visitors at some of the transfer stations, winter hours remain in effect for the month of April at the Quinn Street Recycle Depot and Transfer Station. This means the facility will be closed on Tuesdays and Wednesday. Transfer stations in Vanway, Valemount, McBride and Mackenzie are also maintaining winter hours for the month of April. All other sites including the Foothills Boulevard Regional Landfill remain open regular hours.

Out of concerns related to COVID-19, some recycling depots are also closed. The Prince George Return It Center has closed due to COVID-19, along with the Elks Bottle Depot in Mackenzie. For the most up to date information on which bottle depots remain open, visit www.return-it.ca

For details on operating days and times of Regional District solid waste facilities, visit www.rdffg.bc.ca

The Regional District asks residents to consider the following when handling their household waste and recycling:

- Is this something that needs immediate disposal (ie food waste) or can it be disposed of later
- Maximize the use of curbside collection for waste and/or recyclables where available
- Eliminate all unnecessary trips to the landfill or transfer stations
- Not all bottle depots are open. Call ahead before you head out
- For everyone's healthy and safety, please follow social distancing protocols at the landfills and transfer stations and stay 6 feet away from other people

“The Regional District understands how important it is to have the landfills and transfer stations open to serve the public. We hope with the public’s co-operation we can make our facilities safer for everyone and reduce unnecessary pressure put on our sites during this challenging time,” Zapotichny concludes.

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