



CWC

Best Practices in Wood Waste Recycling

Permitting and Environmental Management of Outdoor Storage Issues

Material: Wood Waste

Issue: *Outdoor storage is necessary for wood-waste processing operations. However, this practice might concern local regulators because contaminants and naturally-occurring constituents might be released into the environment. Some regulators might determine that permitting or regulations are necessary to avoid stockpiling, long-term accumulation, and potential abandonment. These negative situations have occurred with other materials, such as tires. As a result, outdoor piles have a bad image in many jurisdictions.*

Best Practice: This Best Practice recommends the facility operator take a proactive approach to permitting. Although some operators have been successful in taking a “build first, ask questions later” approach, many operations have also suffered from costly fines, retrofits, and even a shutdown of operations.

Implementation: The facility owner or operator would contact the local authorities during the feasibility study or the design stage to check on permit requirements and environmental controls. This approach allows the cost of required control measures to be incorporated into the facility’s financial plan. Also, any required control measures could be incorporated into the design prior to construction, thus, lowering the costs by avoiding retrofitting them later.

Existing facilities might want to check on permit requirements when retrofitting the facility, changing ownership, accepting new types of materials, and making any changes in the facility’s operations. Seemingly innocuous changes might have far-reaching consequences. For instance, a facility might decide to start accepting loads of pallets, considering this material to be a clean source of additional fiber. However, pallets are classified as an industrial waste in some jurisdictions. Processing them might cause a facility to fall under a more stringent set of permitting and handling requirements.

Potential permit issues and related regulations include:

Issues specific to outdoor storage

- Air quality (odor, dust)
- Water quality (runoff impacting ground or surface waters)
- Visual (obstruction of views, other aesthetic impacts)
- Fire safety
- Size of piles
- Turnover of piles (stockpiling is discouraged)

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Additional issues for general facility operations

- Zoning and land use
- Traffic mitigation
- Other health and safety
- Noise
- Nuisance appearances
- Noxious emissions

Other best practices, such as keeping materials on concrete surfaces and inspecting for contaminated loads, would reduce environmental risks and improve the facility's image.

Benefits: A proactive approach in complying with permit and environmental requirements has the following benefits:

- Avoids costly retrofits
- Avoids fines, penalties and the potential for facility closure
- Lowers legal fees
- Promotes a good working relationship with local regulators and the community which could improve business (through referrals and other means), and ensure reasonable responses to future problems or issues.

Application Site: Processing Facility.

Contact: For more information about this Best Practice, contact CWC (206) 443-7746, e-mail info@cw.org.

References:

1. Hlavka, Rick. Green Solutions. South Prairie, WA.
2. Sargent, Robert. Rainier Wood Recyclers. Kent, WA.

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