

RECYCLING AND MATERIAL RECOVERY FACILITIES



UPDATING THE “350” RULE

Solid Waste Handling Standards, Chapter 173-350 of the Washington Administrative Code, is a regulation addressing waste management issues as diverse as used tires, surface impoundments, and incineration.

These rules govern how individuals, businesses and governments can manage solid waste, what materials can be recycled, when permits are required, and many other technical details.

Updating the rule allows Ecology to address emerging issues, look for ways to improve its effectiveness and get feedback from stakeholders.



Section 210 — Recycling and material recovery facilities

Washington’s solid and hazardous waste plan calls for our state to eliminate waste and toxics whenever possible, and to use the remaining wastes as resources to be recycled or reused. Effective recycling programs and efficient materials recovery facilities are essential parts of achieving these goals.

In the current 350 rule, recycling and materials recovery facilities (MRFs) are covered in different sections. Both recycling and material recovery can be done under an exemption from permitting if conditions can be met, and both used the same forms for notification. However, some facilities require a permit to operate, and if an operator didn’t look in the correct section, they might not see that they did not qualify for an exemption.

Also, sometimes a facility does both material recovery and recycling. Operators were confused as to what standards applied.

To alleviate confusion, Ecology is proposing to move the materials recovery facility standards into the same section as recycling, and aligned permit and exemption criteria for both.

Standards for facilities that store waste in piles are addressed in Section 320, “Piles Used for Storage or Treatment.”

Major changes

The material recovery facilities standards were moved from WAC 173-350-310 to section 210, which is now called “Recycling and material recovery facilities.” Handling requirements for both permitted and permit exempt MRFs and recyclers were standardized.

Changes were made to definitions. Both the definitions of MRFs and Recycling were updated to clarify that recycling and material recovery,

Contacts

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To be kept up to date on developments in the 350 rulemaking, please subscribe to our ListServ at the link above.

For questions on section 210, “Recycling and Material Recovery Facilities,” contact Gary Bleeker or Allison Kingfisher with Waste 2

Resources:

Gary Bleeker
509-575-2837
gary.bleeker@ecy.wa.gov

Allison Kingfisher
509-329-3448
allison.kingfisher@ecy.wa.gov

For questions on the 350 rule update process, contact Kyle Dorsey, rules coordinator for Waste 2 Resources:

Kyle Dorsey
360-407-6559
kyle.dorsey@ecy.wa.gov

Special accommodations

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while different activities, can occur at the same location.

The proposed MRF definition states

Material recovery facility means any facility that receives, compacts, repackages, or sorts source-separated solid waste for the purpose of recycling.

The recycling definition now states

Recycling means transforming or remanufacturing waste materials into usable or marketable materials for use other than disposal or incineration. Recycling includes processing waste materials to produce tangible commodities. Recycling does not include crushing, shredding, compacting, sorting, baling, or repackaging when those activities are part of collection, intermediate processing, or preparation for the purpose of transport.

Definitions were added for “commingled recyclable materials” and “commodity”

- “Commingled recyclable materials” means a mixture of several types of recyclable materials in one load or container, such as but not limited to aluminum cans, paper, plastic, and cardboard in one container, or wood, concrete, and metal in one load.
- “Commodity” means a material that meets widely recognized standards and specifications, such as those from ASTM International or the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Inc., (for example, commodity-grade scrap metal) that is mutually interchangeable with other materials meeting the same specifications, and that has well-established markets.

These changes will help both facilities and regulatory agencies

- Adding MRFs to the Recycling section improves the likelihood that owners and operators will identify the appropriate standards to follow.
- Decoupling MRF permitting standards from those of transfer stations helps clarify to other regulatory agencies that permitted MRFs are not disposal facilities. This can help with zoning issues.
- Aligning the requirements of the two types of handing levels the playing field for design and operations.
- The standards used for both material recovery facilities and recycling facilities now provide equally protective measures for higher-risk operations, and provide equal permit exemption criteria for lower-risk operations. This improves opportunities for industry, while protecting human health and the environment as we work to expand recycling and recovery in our state.

