

MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR CLOSED MUNICIPAL LANDFILLS

Municipalities are responsible for inspecting and maintaining their closed landfills. Regular inspection and maintenance is vital to ensure the cover system remains effective at reducing the risk of groundwater contamination.

ANNUAL MOWING

Tree growth must be prevented on landfills, as the shallow cover material will not support trees as they mature. Blown over trees will damage the cover and expose waste. Deep roots of trees also provide a pathway for infiltration of water into the waste.

- Mow closed landfills at least once annually.
- Mowing in August or later avoids disturbing nesting birds.
- Mow to the base of the landfill and several feet beyond if possible.
- Cut back encroaching trees & brush at the landfill base and remove trees that have fallen onto the landfill cover.

GAS VENTS

- Inspect gas vents and notify the Department of vents that are damaged or missing.
- Repair or replace them as directed. Avoid flames or sparks when near landfill vents.

ANIMAL BURROWS

Animal burrows provide a direct pathway for water infiltration into the waste.

- If you find a burrow, trap or otherwise remove the occupant and fill in the burrow with loam. Do not use sandy or gravelly soil.

INSPECTION and REPAIR

- Keep an eye on the condition of the landfill cover.
- A walkover inspection should be made at least twice a year. The best times are in the spring following snowmelt and after mowing.
- Check for dead grass, animal burrows, settlement and erosion.
- Prevent ATV-related damage by controlling access as necessary through fencing, gates, barriers or signage. The condition and effectiveness of access control measures should be checked during inspections and enhanced if necessary.

SETTLEMENT

Waste can settle over time, causing depressions in the landfill surface and ponding water.

- Fill depressions with loam to restore positive drainage, then reseed and mulch the area as soon possible to reestablish the grass cover.
- Notify the department if any of the following conditions are encountered: differential (uneven) settlement; cracking of the cover soil; or sloughing of sideslopes. These conditions could indicate a landfill stability problem.



Questions? Contact: Matt Young at (207) 215-7841 or matthew.r.young@maine.gov

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EROSION CONTROL

Unchecked erosion will remove the cover material, eventually exposing the waste. Good grass cover is important to prevent soil erosion.

- Reseed areas of sparse grass growth or amend them with manure, fertilizer or another nutrient source to promote more vigorous growth.
- Continued stressed or dead vegetation may indicate the cover soils are saturated with landfill gas. If this problem persists, contact Department staff for assistance.
- Repair all eroded areas as soon as practical to prevent the problem from worsening.
- “Rill” type erosion—small, concentrated channels on the landfill surface that are no more than a few inches deep—can be repaired by raking out the rills and re-seeding.
- If deeper gullies have formed, contact the department for direction. Structural measures may be needed to repair gullies that have progressed down to the clayey barrier soils underlying the topsoil.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Many municipal landfills have engineered stormwater control features such as plunge pools, ditches, culverts and check dams.

- Check the condition of any such features during regular inspections and after major rainfall events.
- Look for obstructions, tree and shrub growth, erosion, sediment accumulation and displacement of riprap. Conduct any needed cleanout and repairs in a timely manner and remove encroaching trees and shrubs.

LEACHATE BREAKOUTS

Leachate breakouts or “seeps” are common at closed landfills. Leachate is liquid, usually orange or rust-colored, that has been in contact with the landfill waste. Most breakouts occur at the base (or toe) of the landfill and do not usually require corrective action. If the breakout is through the landfill cover, contact the Department to determine if repairs are needed.

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Maine DEP Regional Offices

Augusta (Central Maine Regional Office) 287-7688; 800-452-1942

Bangor (Eastern Maine Regional Office) 941-4570; 888-769-1137

Portland (Southern Maine Regional Office) 822-6300; 888-769-1036

Presque Isle (Northern Maine Regional Office) 764-0477; 888-769-1053

