A DAY AT THE LANDFILL

What's the difference between a dump and a landfill? A dump is a hole in the ground with trash simply piled in it. A landfill, on the other hand, is a sophisticated, engineered construction project that makes use of the latest science to protect the environment. In Los Angeles County alone, over 65,000 tons of trash is produced each day (that's over 13 pounds of trash per person per day!). About half of that is recycled and the other half goes to the landfill.

Landfills use science and engineering to prevent pollution, help the environment and protect our health. Trash is covered at the end of every day to prevent odors and to stop it from flying away. Landfill gas is created when the buried trash decomposes. This landfill gas is collected in pipes and recycled into electricity and fuel. Materials that may be dangerous, such as hazardous or radioactive waste, are not allowed at the landfill. Can you see how this is done? Can you also see what is being recycled at this landfill? Do you know what happens to recovered materials such as green waste? tires?

Recycle Center
A certified buy-back recycling center pays you for the glass, paper, aluminum, and plastic you recycle. Some locations also accept waste oil for recycling.

Asphalt Recovery
Used asphalt thrown away during road construction can be collected and reused to build roads at the landfill.

Green Waste Recycling
Yard waste, or green waste, is a large part of the waste we make in Los Angeles County. It can be ground up and recycled into compost or mulch.

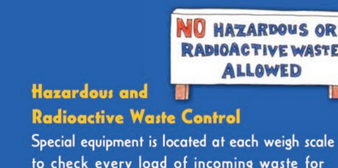
Metal Recovery
Large metal appliances, such as refrigerators, washing machines, and stoves, can be recycled at a landfill. Refrigerants can be removed from refrigerators and air conditioners and recycled into the air conditioning units of landfill vehicles. The remaining metal from these and other appliances can be sold to scrap salvagers.

Landfill Energy Recovery
Gas is formed when waste decomposes in a landfill. This is called biogas and it can be collected and used to make electricity. Biogas can also be used to heat and cool buildings. And it can be made into a clean vehicle fuel. If it is not collected, the biogas can be a part of smog and global warming and cause odors.

Biogas Collection
A network of wells, underground trenches and collection pipes collect the biogas that is created as trash decomposes in the landfill. A team of specially trained engineering technicians continuously checks the entire gas collection system. Collecting the gas also controls odors from the decomposing material.

Groundwater protection
Landfills can protect groundwater in several ways. The site can be chosen for its natural containment features. Inspectors can check the waste as it comes into the landfill to keep out unacceptable waste. Most importantly, landfills are required to build on top of a liner system made up of thick plastic and clay layers. Lastly, a ring of groundwater wells surround the landfill and are checked to make sure all protection features are operating properly.

Future Open Space
When a landfill is full, it can be kept as open space with lots of plants that benefit surrounding habitat and provide recreational opportunities, such as hiking.



Hazardous and Radioactive Waste Control
Special equipment is located at each weigh scale to check every load of incoming waste for radioactivity. Inspectors are present all the time while trash is being buried to inspect for hazardous wastes.

Dust and Litter Control
Water trucks continually spray the roadways and disposal area with water to keep down dust. Completed fill areas are planted and watered to minimize dust. Crews collect any scattered litter and install moveable fences that surround the day's trash to capture any blowing litter on windy days.

Landscaping and Visual Appearance
Earthen berms block views of the daily trash placement and help reduce noise from the trucks and other equipment. Landscaping can screen the views and help the landfill look good. Some landfills even use recycled water to irrigate the landscaping.

Tire Shredder
Tires can be recycled in many ways. Some are used as fuel cement kilns, made into products such as running tracks or traffic cones, or at least shredded to reduce landfill volume.

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