

THE PROBLEM:

Salvage yards are an important source of end-of-life recycling for motor vehicles. However, these yards can also be a source of pollution and endanger the health of nearby communities if they are not properly maintained and regulated.

Junkyards contain many hazardous materials including lead batteries, mercury from light switches, anti-freeze, Freon from cooling systems, Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), asbestos found in the brake pads and lining of older cars, motor oil, and heavy other metals.



In Strafford, VT a collection of junk sits on a half-acre lot on Miller Pond Road which borders a stream. Neighbors regularly pull tires and scrap metal from the stream, which runs through many of their yards. The junkyard is not licensed and has continued to grow over the years.

These toxins pose real health risks. Mercury is linked to kidney disease, and lead from batteries may cause many health issues, including brain damage, problems with the blood and damage to the reproductive and nervous systems. Also, asbestos and PCBs are carcinogenic. These heavy metals and other contaminants may enter drinking water and pose a risk to human health for everyone living near a salvage yard or sharing an aquifer.

There are environmental concerns as well. CFCs, commonly known as Freon, is emitted from vehicles causing air pollution. If oil is spread on the ground, it may contaminate plants, animals, soil and groundwater. Many of these junkyards operate in the midst of neighborhoods.

In Milton, VT ABC Metals is home to an estimated one million tires, posing a fire and disease hazard. EPA testing has found toxic chemicals in the surrounding neighborhood, including PCBs and arsenic. After nine years without a permit, the junkyard continues to operate.

THE SOLUTION:

We believe in passing stronger junkyard laws to ensure our communities are safe from health and environmental problems.

Community Action Works Campaigns worked with Milton CLEAN, Williamstown Healthy Environment Neighborhood Alliance, Strafford Green, residents from Sharon, and VPIRG to pass stronger junkyard laws. The laws created setbacks from waterways, drinking water wells, and wetlands, gave towns more discretion in deciding appropriate locations for salvage yards, and established the Agency of Natural Resources as the state's salvage yard regulator

RESOURCES:

Want to take the next steps toward salvage yard regulation? The resources below are specific to junkyards in Vermont, but are a good starting place for anyone looking to hold polluting junkyards accountable.

- [State Environmental Permitting Memo](#)
Vermont law requires these safe practices of any salvage yard selling, storing, or processing scrap metal and to individuals keeping four or more “junk vehicles.”
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
All of your frequently asked questions regarding salvage yards are answered here.
- [Implementation flowchart](#)
Here is a visual explaining how to implement these laws in your municipality.
- [Town certificate process chart](#)
This document establishes a uniform method for completing each phase of the salvage yard process.
- [Town notification to residents of law change](#)
This memo is written to notify residents about changes to the law on salvage yards.
- [Town initial inspection checklist](#)
This checklist is intended to document the initial inspection and to determine if the operation meets the definition of a salvage yard.
- [Town letter to illegal salvage yard owner](#)
Here is a letter to send to an owner or operator of an uncertified salvage yard.

- [Application for certificate of location](#)
This application ensures the approval for the location of a salvage yard.
- [Town salvage yard tracking sheet](#)
Here is a document to track your progress during the process.
- [Notice of noncompliance](#)
Linked is a letter to send if the owner fails to submit an application for certificate of location.
- [Salvage yard denial letter](#)
This is a denial letter in which you would explain the reasons for denying the location.
- [Town letter approving certificate](#)
Here is a letter explaining location acceptance.
- [Reminder of upcoming certificate renewal](#)
Here is a letter notifying owners their certification is expiring.
- [Application for certificate of location renewal](#)
Linked is an application to renew this location certificate.