

Recycling Safely During COVID-19: Municipal Recycling



**NRRA Annual Conference
May 10, 2021**

*Bonnie Bethune, NRRA Member Services
Manager*

How far we've come since April 2020

Back then.....

- Some recycling facilities closed but most facilities remained open as policies were put in place to protect staff and residents from COVID-19
- Protective measures were put in place such as masks, distancing and even increased hours to help with distancing
- Restricted admittance to recycling buildings, offices and Swap Shops



Social distancing at Lebanon NH Recycling Facility

More changes at the beginning of COVID-19 were....

- Some recyclables were not accepted at recycling facilities such as plastics, cardboard and mixed paper
- Some facilities changed their traffic patterns
- Only one person at a time allowed to deposit recyclables and trash
- All NRRA markets were accepting material except our #1-7 plastics plant in PA; material was still moving into Canada

April 2020 and forward...

- NRRRA's Best Management Practices Webinar with Dr. Locwin provided guidance and encouragement in April 2020 (over 550 views!)
- Recycling facilities saw an uptick in municipal solid waste (MSW) and construction and demolition debris (C&D) tonnage
- Most residents understood and complied with new policies – some put up resistance
- NRRRA's Best Management Practices Webinar w/ Dr. Locwin provided updates in December 2020

KEENE, NH – Personal
Protective Equipment
on the sorting line

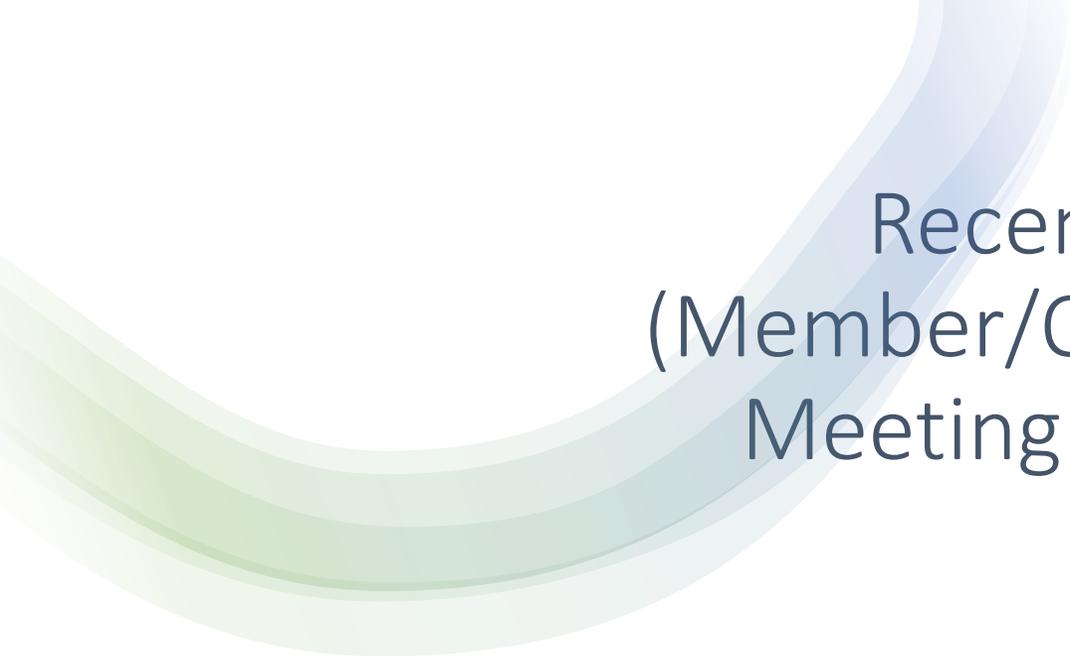


A year later.....April 2021

- All Facilities operational; many at 100%
- Some policies remain in place such as no admittance into buildings or offices; new traffic patterns stay in force
- Many facilities continue to use of protective masks (but masks may be optional for Staff)
- Some continue use of gloves, distancing, and keeping Swap Shops closed



Sunapee, NH – traffic flow



Recent NRRA M.O.M. (Member/Operations Marketing) Meeting Discussion 4-14-21

David Witham, Director of Risk Management at Primex in NH, met with our group and gave advice on recycling facility safety in general, as well as swap shops in particular, during COVID-19.

His good advice: “Encourage a workplace culture that encourages proactive and socially responsible behavior.”





Recycling Facilities Basic Control Measures from Primex

Continue to encourage:

- Masks
- 6' + distance
- Frequent hand washing
- Hand sanitizer 60%+ alcohol
- If vaccinated – still wear masks
- Slow walk back to 'normalcy'

Swap Shops at Recycling Facilities

When is the right time to re-open during pandemic?

Swap Shops were initially closed due to surface contamination concerns.

Swap Shops, remained closed due to small areas or buildings for storing items and no room for residents to distance themselves.

Swap shops...first to close; last to open

- Delicate issue for Staff to regulate public access to Swap Shops under normal circumstances; COVID-19 made it even more challenging
- With Swap Shops – communities need to establish regulations and safety rules that Staff can refer to and use as backup when challenged by insistent residents

Candia NH's Swap Shop





Top shelves of the bookshelf containing various books and video games.

Video game titles on the lower shelves of the bookshelf:
OUR GANG: TOLLIES OF 1918
OUR GANG: THE ASSASSIN
POLICE SQUAD!
COLLEGE HOCKEY
THE LOST BOYS
SCREAM
CLUE
WILD WILD WEST
UNDER SIEGE
POLICE CARS
MEMOREX
PSYCHOMANIA
STAND ALONE
maxell
Twister
FUNERAL FOR AN AMERICAN

Books and games on the yellow shelving unit:
Nibbling of Einstein's Brain
Various other books and games

Items on the desk and shelves in the background:
Kageo Ringo
Rockets
B.B.B.S.
ANNULEGE
BAD WIRELESS
OODLES
24
OUTDOORIST
A yellow ribbon is tied to the desk.



Final advice from Primex....

David Witham advised communities to look to local emergency management entities, local administration and State of NH Public Health for guidance in re-opening Swap Shops.

He reminded our group to recall that we are still in a pandemic – even with vaccines.

April 26, 2021

NRRA Listserv Question

Q: What % would you say your facility is back to “normal” with COVID-19 being a year plus in?

A: “Ashland NH is 100%”

A: Londonderry VT:” I don’t think we ever dropped below 90% open. The only service that COVID-19 affected was our Take It or Leave It, reuse shed.”

A: “Rollinsford NH is 100%.”

A: “Francestown NH is back to normal with the exception of the Swap Shop which remains closed for the foreseeable future.”

April 26, 2021
NRRA Listserv Question (Continued...)

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A: New London, NH “To accommodate COVID we started wearing masks, rerouted how people entered and used the facility. We shut down the Swap Shop. Other than that, it was business as usual. At this time, there is no plan to reopen the Swap Shop, but everything else is now the new normal, so we are at 100%, and have been all along.”

A: “Hooksett, NH has been 100% and then some. “

A: “Pelham, NH is 100%”

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Is this the “new normal”?

Recycling Facilities may continue some or all of the following:

- Continued use of PPE
- Contactless payment systems
 - 1) Town invoices for items dropped at recycling facility
 - 2) Littleton, NH uses Square to accept credit cards
- Reduced admittance to recycling building, offices or bathroom facilities
- Traffic patterns to continue distancing

One lesson learned:

- Recycling facility operating procedures need to have clear contingency plans in case of widespread illness amongst Staff, a future pandemic or a natural disaster
- Here are some sample questions:
 - 1) Do we have clear procedures in place for staff and residents?
 - 2) Who will staff facility if some or all are out sick?
 - 3) What kind of mutual aid could be depended upon?
 - 4) Do we have the proper PPE in supply?



As we move forward,
one of the most important lessons learned.....

.....we are all in this together.

Thank you for all you do
and continue to stay
safe!

Bonnie Bethune
NRRA Member Services Manager
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603-736-4401 x 118

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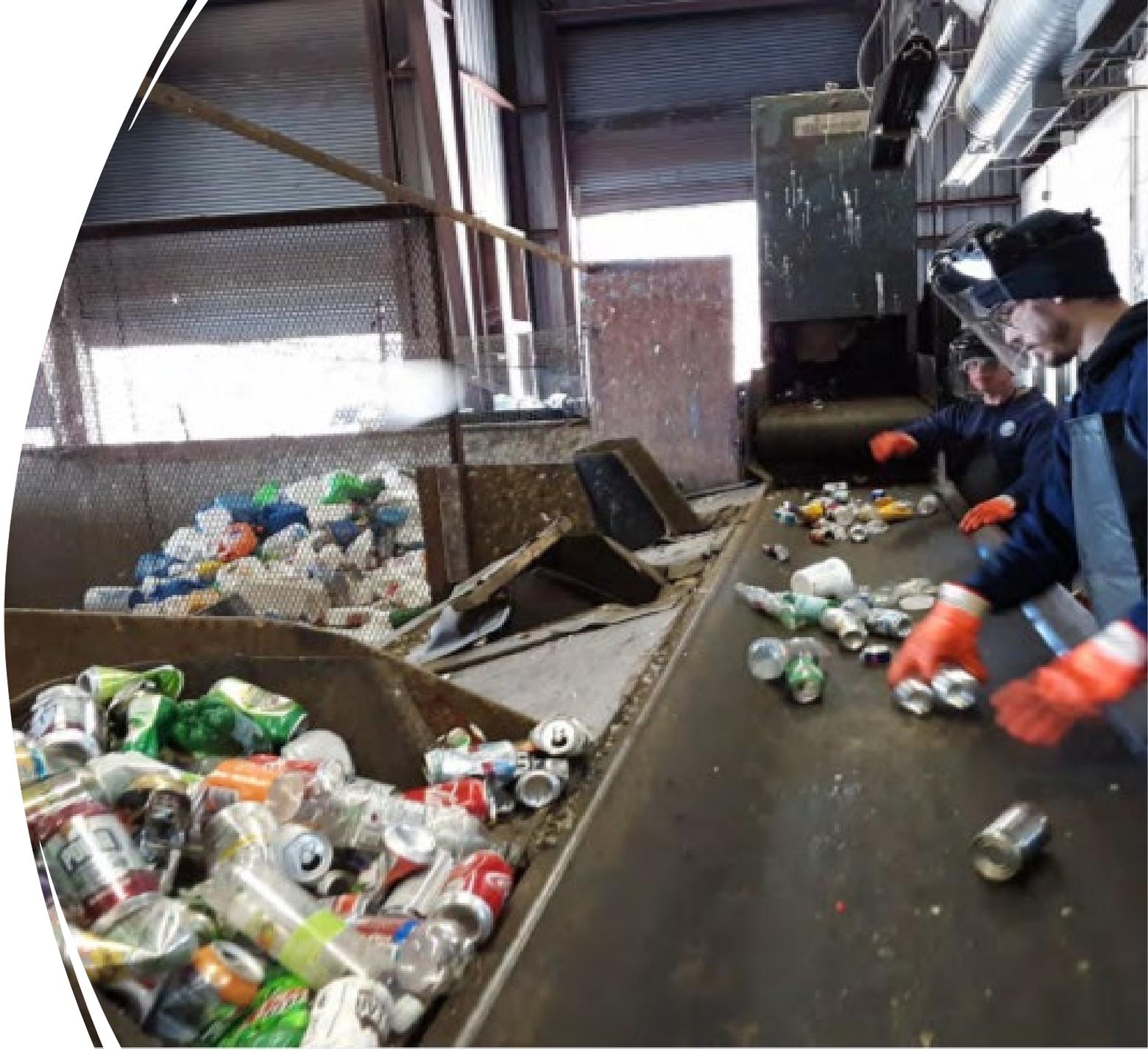
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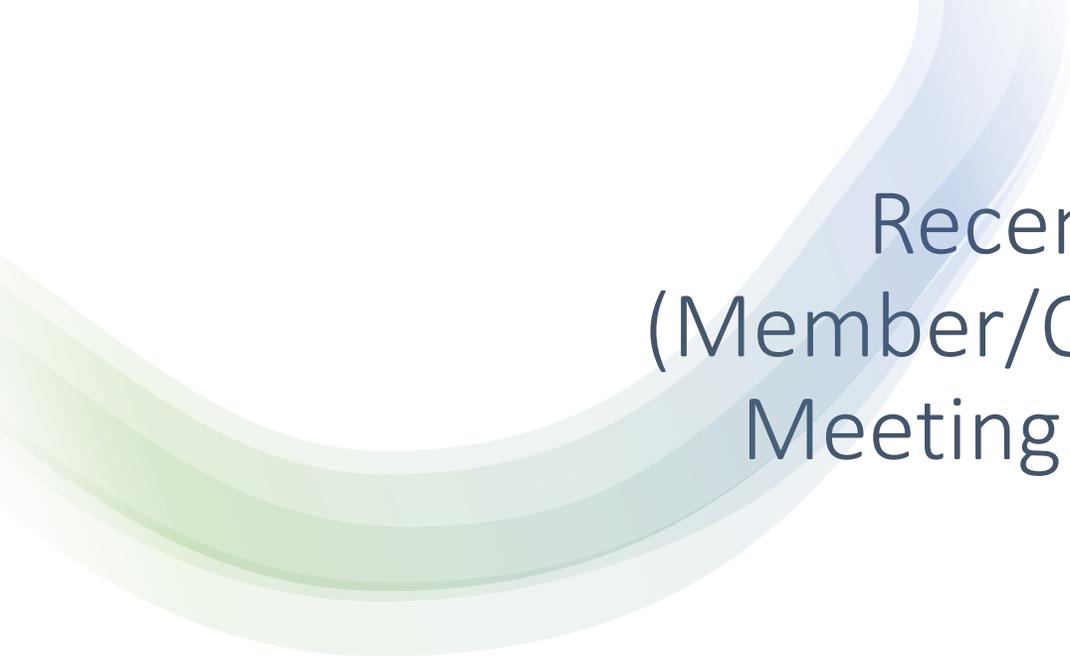


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Basic Control Measures

from Primex



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