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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This case study reviews safety and groundwater contamination concerns at the Town of Andover transfer station, with a primary focus on scrap metal contamination and household hazardous waste (HHW) disposal. The project was completed in July 2026 with guidance from NH Recycles, as part of a USDA grant.

Key Area	Summary
Residential education	NH Recycles mailed residents information about HHW disposal, collection events, and battery safety. Continued outreach through signs, websites, handouts, and social media is recommended.
Operator training	Andover operators completed 41 hours of training related to transfer station operations and safety, including conferences, site visits, and tours.
Scrap metal contamination	Operators removed rechargeable batteries and an item containing gasoline from the scrap metal container. If missed, these items could have caused vendor fines, fires, or groundwater contamination.
Household hazardous waste	Improperly dropped-off oil and chemicals created cleanup costs of more than \$3,800. Better resident education and clearer disposal options can help reduce future costs.

Main recommendations: Improve resident education, inspect incoming and outgoing loads, increase signage in key areas, continue operator training, promote HHW event participation, and consider two-stage scrap metal separation where space allows.

INTRODUCTION

During July 2026, the Town of Andover, NH, with the guidance of NH Recycles as part of a USDA grant conducted a case study in regard to safety and ground water contamination. The majority of this was looking at scrap metal but also included other recyclables as well.

RESIDENTIAL EDUCATION

At the beginning of the project, NH Recycles mailed all addresses in the town a postcard with the following information:

- HHW disposal options including a QR code for local collection events
- Battery safety issues with a QR code with information specific to vapes



STOP!

HHW Disposal

You can attend **any** Lakes Region RPC HHW event this summer!

Event Details:



(No batteries at HHW!)

Or Visit:

lakesrpc.nh.gov/household-hazardous-waste-program/



Know - Don't Throw!

Watch for **fuel** and **batteries**!



Stay Safe: Lithium-Ion Battery Fires Behave Differently than Most Fires.

Lithium-ion batteries can catch fire, explode, and reignite - even after the fire appears to be out!

Keep batteries and battery-powered devices out of scrap metal. If an item has a motor, cord, or rechargeable function, assume it contains a battery. Common culprits include...

E-bikes and scooters • Power tools • Toys • Vapes •
Vacuums • Light-up shoes • Rechargeable mops

When in doubt, ask facility staff before disposing of the item.

Never try to handle a smoking, swollen, or burning battery.

Move away and call 911. Fire extinguishers can slow the spread of fire, but they may not stop the battery's internal reaction.

Bringing old equipment to the scrap metal collection?

Remove all batteries, gasoline, diesel fuel, and oil before bringing lawnmowers, weed trimmers, snow blowers, or other equipment.

Battery Disposal Locations:

Lowes, Home Depot, Staples, or the Andover Transfer Station

For more info about vapes:



Lithium-Ion Battery Disposal Ban

Lithium-ion batteries are prohibited from disposal in New Hampshire under RSA 149-M:27.

Lithium-ion batteries do not belong in the trash or mixed recycling.

They can ignite or explode when crushed, punctured, or compacted—putting workers, facilities, and equipment at risk.

Turn over for important battery, scrap metal, & HHW safety info.



Town of Andover
31 School Street
Andover, NH 03216

This recycling education is brought to you by your recycling nonprofit, NH Recycles at www.nhrecycles.org



NH Recycles Recommendations:

Residential education is a key aspect to help reduce contamination and safety concerns. While we understand that not all towns can do a direct mailer to all households in the town, there are other ways to educate residents including:

- Signage at the transfer station (including scrap metal guidance and disposal bans). Signs can be downloaded and printed from the [NH Recycles Sign Library](#) or ordered through [NH the Beautiful Sign Program](#) using your annual, municipal points.
- Share articles on social media and town website, including [NH Recycles news articles](#).
- Post links on town website to important sites like HHW events, [NHDES Managing My Waste webpage](#), and the [NH Recycles Resource Library](#).
- Place handouts at the transfer station, town office and other public spaces.
- Create a FAQ page on your town website and create a QR code which you can print and hand out at the transfer station.
- Use a TV screen to create a revolving bulletin board with notices for your residents.

“Without the mailer, I would not have known about the hazardous waste events since I don’t use the transfer station.” — Andover resident

OPERATOR TRAINING

The solid waste industry is constantly changing and NH Recycles understands this, so they offer several training opportunities for members each year. This can range from bus tours, conferences, member-only meetings, webinars, and in-person summits or site visits. During this grant period, operators from Andover attended the following NH Recycles training/meetings:

- 2026 NH Recycles Conference – 5 operators
- Solid waste safety site visit – 3 operators
- Solid waste safety tour – 1 operator

In total, staff attended 41 hours of training regarding operations and safety for transfer stations.

NH Recycles Recommendations:

- Keep eye on upcoming events through NH Recycles, NHDES, and [your local planning commission](#). For the Town of Andover, that is the [Lakes Region Planning Commission](#).
- Sign up for [NH Recycles Full Of Scrap Newsletter](#).

If you have questions, don’t be afraid to contact Member Services at NH Recycles via email (info@nhrecycles.org) or by phone (603) 736-4401. You are not alone in this. We are here to help and can point you in the right direction.

SCRAP METAL CONTAMINATION

Accepting scrap metal at a transfer station is a convenience and a proper disposal option for residents as well as a revenue source for towns. As times change, so do regulations, concerns, and safety issues.

Most scrap metal that NH Recycles members collects is either baled, shredded, or a combination of both after it leaves their facilities. Baling helps reduce air space so vendors can transport more material to a shredder. Shredders condense material and remove most of the contamination like cloth, plastic, and other materials. In doing so, this creates areas of concern for both groundwater contamination and fire hazards. Those hazards include gas, oil, batteries, explosive gases like propane, and other materials.

The Town of Andover transfer station itself has seen two loads in recent years that contained gasoline or rechargeable batteries. A warning was given for one instance, and a \$525 fine was given for the other. If too many offenses are accrued, this can lead to suspension or bans for material acceptance at scrap yards.

Andover does not have space for two stage separation, so the operators periodically check the scrap metal container for contamination, look over incoming loads, and have signage at the metal area. During the project, operators found the following items, that they removed from the scrap metal container:

- 2 rechargeable batteries.
- 1 item with gasoline.

If this material was not found and removed, it would have been a cost of \$1,575 in fines from their scrap metal vendor, as well as possible ground contamination if the gas spilled or caused a fire either at the baler in Concord, NH, the shredder in Everett, MA, or onsite at the transfer station.

- NH Recycles: [Hidden Dangers in Your Scrap Metal Pile](#)
- YouTube video: [Sky over scrapyards fire in Everett, Massachusetts](#)
- YouTube video: [Crews battling large fire at scrapyards in Westport, Massachusetts](#)



NH Recycles Recommendations:

- Two-stage separation
- Have operators inspect incoming and outgoing loads
- Post signage. Consider color blindness if you create your own signs.
 - [New Hampshire the Beautiful Facility Signs](#)
 - [NH Recycles Sign Library](#)
- Since operators should be looking for contamination anyways, this is a great time to start a non-ferrous program to generate extra revenue. A simple program, if the town has room, can generate thousands of dollars in revenue to offset other disposal costs.
 - NH Recycles: [How to Start a Non-Ferrous Metal Recycling Program](#)
 - NH Recycles: [Air Conditional Separation](#)



HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE (HHW)

One area of problems for the Town of Andover was that people were leaving items like oil and other chemicals at the facility without permission. The facility then had to store onsite and remove it. In July 2026, NH Recycles coordinated a vendor to come in and clean out their stored material. This was a cost of over \$3,800 to the taxpayers of Andover. This included the following:

- 252 gallons of used motor oil.
- Approximately 60 gallons of other items.

This material looked like it was collected for numerous years before disposal.

NH Recycles added the dates of the Lakes Region Planning Commission (LRPC) annual HHW events to the mailer to give residents an easy way of identifying events, to properly dispose of material. LRPC provides 6 annual events for 22 participating towns, including Andover with a limit of 10 gallons or 50 pounds per household per event. They also provide links for residents about

alternative events which people can pay for disposal, as well as educational and low toxic alternatives. At the time this is published, the 2026 data was not yet available. However, Andover residents only accounted for under 2% of participants from the 2024 and 2025 events. By distributing mailers, NH Recycles hopes that more Andover residents participated in the 2026 events.

NH Recycles Recommendations:

- Have a printable brochure as well as a dedicated area on the town website for HHW event details and information for residents about disposal options of hazardous materials.
 - [Lakes Region Household Hazardous Waste Program](#)
- Inspect loads of incoming waste for hazardous materials, including black bags of construction and demolition debris.
- YouTube video: [Large trash fire extends to excavator, destroying it at Keene Transfer Station, authorities say](#)
- Add a QR code to a printed brochure that points to HHW events and disposal options. The QR could point to safety information on your town website, solid waste district, local planning commission, or the NH Recycles [Solid Waste Safety Toolkit](#) online.
- Remember to consider color blindness if you create your own signs.
- Aerosol containers, meaning anything with a propellant, can be handled as a universal waste. This includes spray paint, hairspray, sunscreen, bug spray, and cleaners. Contact NH Recycles for more information or review NHDES' resources:
 - [Aerosol cans](#)
 - [Universal waste](#)
- Do you collect used oil on-site? Think about getting a used oil furnace to help save disposal costs as well as save on heating costs. NHDES offers [grants for facilities that collect used oil](#) from residents who change their own oil. The funds may be used to establish, improve or operate a used oil collection center, as well as transport used oil off-site to a licensed recycler.
 - [NHDES Used Oil webpage](#)

