

Direct Business and School Outreach: Sample Site Visit or Phone Call Script

Tips:

1. **Prioritize outreach** to businesses or institutions (hospitals, schools, universities, nursing homes) that are larger, have known issues, or have not been contacted recently.
 2. **Be prepared** with handouts and information about local materials management services (see below for examples).
 3. **Keep a friendly, professional, helpful tone.**
 4. **Connect them to resources** (haulers & services).
 5. **Take thorough notes and keep track** (such as with the DEC tracking spreadsheet template).
 6. **Send a follow-up email (template below), as needed** with answers to questions and provide resources.
 7. **Remember that there are resources available** on the [DEC Planning page](#).
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At the business/institution or on the phone:

“Hi, this is your name from the SWME name. We do quick waste check-ins with [businesses/institutions/schools] in our [region/county/town] to help ensure you have information on items banned from trash and landfill disposal and how to reduce, recycle, compost, and manage waste responsibly. Is there an owner, manager, or facilities director I can speak with?”

*If manager/owner/facilities director is not present, ask when they may be available in the future.
If they are available:*

“Hi person in charge’s name, my name is your name and I work for the SWME. We are required to do quick waste check-ins with businesses in our region. Thank you for your time.”

1. **“Let’s start with recycling. State law requires everyone to recycle. Do you have recycling bins or a dumpster that your hauler collects or you drop-off somewhere?”**
 - a. *If they put recyclable items in the trash:*
 - i. **“Are you familiar with the Universal Recycling Law? It bans [steel, aluminum, glass, cardboard, paper, and plastics #1 and #2](#) from the trash. If you are currently trashing any of these recyclables, you’ll need to set up a system to manage them separately from the trash.”**
 - ii. *Explain how businesses keep recyclables out of the trash through pick-up by haulers or bringing them to a transfer station.*
 - iii. *Provide your local hauler list or transfer station information.*
 - b. *Feel free to connect the business with the VT DEC outreach team (802-828-1138) for assistance figuring out how to set up their systems or to answer any other questions.*

2. “What is your system for managing food scraps?”
- a. *If they put food scraps in the trash:*
 - i. “State law requires everyone to keep edible food and food waste out of the trash and to safely donate edible food to food shelves, safely feed animals, or compost. In our region/town we have [explain your local services like haulers, transfer stations, or compost facilities where food waste can be managed](#).”
 - ii. “If you are putting food scraps in the trash, then you need to set up a food scrap management system.”
 - iii. “Depending on how much food scraps you produce, there are options:
 1. Compost small amounts of food scraps on-site,
 2. Haul your food scraps to a compost site or transfer station,
 3. Or hire a hauling company to pick up food scraps.
 - a. Haulers usually provide containers and tell you what can go in them (e.g. only food scraps allowed).
 - b. [Find a food scrap hauler at VTrecycles.com](#) (or provide your local hauler list).
 - c. When getting quotes, ask the hauler what the service includes—some companies provide clean bins each time they pick up and a cover material in the summer; other companies leave cleaning to their customers and do not provide cover material.”
 - b. *If feeding pigs:* “Pigs should not be fed anything that has touched meat, bones, or their juices ([AAFM guidance](#)). This is to keep some destructive pig diseases from circulating in Vermont and our region.”
 - c. *Talk about food donation:*
 - i. “Federal law provides liability protection for food donations under the Emerson Act.
 - ii. Donating quality food can bring good press to your business and improve your connection to the local community.
 - iii. Get started by connecting with the Vermont Foodbank or a local food shelf.”
 - d. *Give or email:* [Guidance for Food Donation](#)
3. “Vermont has free [special recycling](#) drop-offs for certain items that are dangerous or banned from the trash.” Show or talk about the [Special Recycling EPR Brochure](#) ([available in several languages](#), as is [a list of collection locations](#)).
- a. “You can bring these landfill banned items to [list the drop off locations for these items](#)”
 - i. [Electronics](#): TVs, computers, monitors, printers, and computer peripherals, and are accepted for free. Other landfill banned electronics, including phones, VCRs, DVD players, game consoles, and stereo/music players, are accepted for a fee.
 - ii. [Paint](#)
 - iii. [Batteries](#)
 - iv. [Fluorescent lightbulbs and thermostats](#)

1. “They contain mercury that can escape if the bulb breaks, so store them carefully and properly. Learn more from the [fluorescent lightbulb factsheet](#) or this [online training](#).”
4. “Do you ever have any hazardous materials like leftover harsh chemicals, automotive products, or cleaning products?”
 - a. “The SWME has regular household hazardous waste (HHW) collections at [facility or events] where very small quantity generators like your business/school can bring in hazardous materials such as solvents, flammables, corrosives, pesticides, etc. to be safely disposed.”
 - b. “For questions about how to manage business hazardous waste, contact the VT Hazardous Waste Program’s Drew.Youngs@vermont.gov or call 802-461-5929 for guidance.”
5. *If they are a retailer or food establishment:* “Do you provide plastic bags at point of sale, use Styrofoam (EPS foam) cups, plates, or containers, or use plastic stirrer sticks? These are banned from use under [Vermont’s Single-Use Products Law](#).”
 - a. “You must charge 10 cents per paper bag at the point of sale ([unless it’s a small, lightweight bag](#)).”
 - b. “You can only give out plastic straws when a customer asks for one (compostable plastic counts as plastic).”
 - c. *Give or email:* [Single-Use Products Law Summary and FAQ](#) or direct to [DEC’s Single-Use Products Law website](#).
6. “What is the biggest component of your trash? Or what is the thing you throw away the most?” *Troubleshoot ways to help them reduce waste or connect them with VT DEC for assistance (802-828-1138).*
7. “Do you have any other questions?”
8. “Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. Don’t hesitate to contact me, at _____, or reach out to the Vermont Solid Waste Program, at 802-828-1138, with any questions or for other assistance, such as recycling or food scrap posters or training assistance. Thank you for your work!”

Give (if in-person) or ask for an email address to send (if speaking on the phone) helpful **handouts, as relevant, such as:**

- A handout with your website or tell them about 802recycles.com, where they can select their town to get directed to their **SWME website**, which has useful local information, including the **A-Z Guide**.
- [Materials Management Requirements for Businesses](#)
- [Waste Not Guide](#)
- [Vermont’s Guide to Recycling](#)

- [Managing Food Scraps](#)
 - [Managing Food Scrap \(and Trash\) Carts in Bear Country](#)
 - [Link to printable bin signs](#)
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Special considerations for schools:

- **Ask to speak with the facilities manager.**
 - Thank them for leading by example and raising the next generation of people who care about the environment and waste.
 - School specific information:
 - o [Hazardous Waste Management and Reduction in Schools](#)
 - o [Sharing Tables Factsheet](#)
 - No-cost assistance is available from the SWME or VT DEC (call 802-828-1138)
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After the visit, use your notes to fill out your tracking spreadsheet, including the **documentation that is required** in the Annual SWIP Reports:

1. Business name
 2. Date contacted
 3. Outreach materials provided (such as the VT Waste Not Guide)
 4. The status of recycling and food scrap diversion programs
 5. Whether follow up is needed
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Follow up as needed to provide more information or to confirm that they've gotten set up to manage their materials properly. Feel free to reach out to VT DEC for help with follow-up for out-of-compliance businesses and institutions, regional or national chains, or others.

Sample Follow-Up Email:

Dear _____.

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me on ___Date___ about how ___your business___ manages different types of waste and materials. As I mentioned, I work for the _____, your local resource for assistance with recycling, composting, and waste reduction. Our phone number is _____.

Attached are some resources to help you with recycling and separating and managing food scraps:

- [Materials Management Requirements for Businesses](#)
- [Waste Not Guide](#)
- [Vermont's Guide to Recycling](#)

- [Managing Food Scraps](#)
- [Managing Food Scrap \(and trash\) Carts in Bear Country](#)
- [Link to printable bin signs](#)

Please visit our website at _____ or the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's webpage at VTrecycles.com for more information.

If you have any questions as you get started developing a [composting/recycling](#) program, please feel free to contact me at [__phone__](#) or [__email__](#). Thank you for your work!

Sincerely,

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