

CRAPO HILL LANDFILL UPDATE- AUGUST 2024

A Message to Our Neighbors

The Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District, often referred to as “the District,” was created to serve New Bedford, Dartmouth, and the surrounding areas. The District realizes that odors leaving the landfill can be unpleasant for our neighbors. One of the goals of the District is to be a good neighbor by limiting our impact on those who live and work closest to us. This update is intended to provide information about how to report odors, why landfills generate odors, and our ongoing efforts to reduce odors. We apologize for any inconvenience these odors cause and appreciate your cooperation and understanding.

Why do landfills generate odors?

As solid waste, or trash, disposed of in a landfill decomposes, it generates landfill gas. Landfill gas is made up mostly of carbon dioxide and methane, but also contains trace amounts of other gases, including hydrogen sulfide. Hydrogen sulfide is the component of landfill gas most often responsible for odors. Even at low concentrations, most people can smell hydrogen sulfide, which sometimes has an odor similar to rotten eggs. Landfill gas is the most common source of off-site odors.

The solid waste itself can also be a source of odors. You are probably familiar with the odor from your own trash barrel. Trucks delivering solid waste to the landfill can also create temporary odors.

What’s being done to reduce the potential for odors?

The District takes several steps to reduce the likelihood of off-site odors. Wells are installed throughout the landfill and are designed to maximize the collection landfill gas. The gas is piped to the “landfill gas to energy facility” located on the site. Here, the gas is combusted in engines which create electricity.

The electricity is sold to the local utility and used to power homes and businesses. Crapo Hill hosts advanced landfill gas monitoring technology from LoCi Controls that automatically monitors conditions in the gas wellfield, helping to quickly detect and resolve any potential issues. The District prioritizes landfill gas collection to minimize odors and emissions, and has staff dedicated to the management of the gas collection system.

The District uses soil and other approved materials to cover waste on a daily basis. Covering the waste helps to minimize odors. Clay and other approved materials that are more effective at preventing gas from escaping from the landfill are also used as cover materials, and extra cover is applied when needed.

ODOR HOTLINE

The District operates a 24/7 odor hotline. Residents can report odors they suspect are coming from the landfill by calling

(508) 763-2423

When calling, please:

- describe the intensity of the odor on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most intense
- provide the address or specific location where the odor is detected
- describe the odor as best you can (trash smell, gas, rotten eggs)
- provide a telephone number where a District representative can reach you

If the District is working to control odors, why are there still odors?

There are a few ways landfill gas can cause odors. First, gas which is not captured by the gas collection system can seep out of the landfill. Gas that is collected and sent to the landfill gas to energy plant can also leak out of piping. The District conducts regular maintenance and monitoring of the gas wellfield to prevent emissions as much as possible.

Combustion of gas containing elevated levels of hydrogen sulfide may also result in odors. Certain materials can result in greater concentrations of hydrogen sulfide. For example, when gypsum (sheetrock) decomposes, it creates hydrogen sulfide. The District does not accept materials that are known to create hydrogen sulfide in the landfill to prevent odors. Also, the District and its partners at the landfill gas to energy facility operate a gas treatment system that removes hydrogen sulfide from the landfill gas before combustion.

What additional efforts will the District take?

The District strives to control odors through daily operational best management practices. These include covering all waste at the end of the day and covering odorous loads as they are received. The landfill gas collection system and landfill gas to energy plant operate 24/7. The exception is during unscheduled or scheduled "outages," such as facility maintenance or instances when the utility company does not need the electricity. Individual flares are used to collect and burn off landfill gas in areas where the collection system does not reach.

When operational practices alone aren't enough and odors persist, we will take additional steps to minimize nuisance odors. Please do not hesitate to call the odor hotline (508)-763-2423 if you are experiencing odors that you believe are coming from the landfill. Check our website <https://gnbrmdistrict.org/> for more information and periodic updates about the landfill.