

WHY DON'T WE JUST BURN OUR GARBAGE?



In the past, burning garbage may have been the only way to eliminate waste especially in rural areas. Today, waste collection and disposal minimizes the need for burning household trash on personal property. However, backyard burning is still common in many areas and globally, and burning food waste along with other materials produces unfiltered air emissions that pose a health risk to humans and to the environment.

HOW BURNING WASTE WORSENS AIR QUALITY



Burning solid waste in large scale incinerating facilities can reduce the amount of waste going into landfills. However, the waste is not sorted so many different types of materials burn, including waste products that could have been recycled. As a result, they can be more toxic than landfills because the combustion creates and releases toxic chemicals and metals that can be released into the air and leached out into groundwater.

WASTE-TO-ENERGY



Confined and controlled burning, known as combustion, can not only decrease the volume of solid waste destined for landfills but can also recover energy from the waste-burning process to generate electricity. A moving grate incinerator is capable of handling 15 tons of waste per hour. This generates an energy source and reduces carbon emissions by offsetting the need for energy from fossil sources and reduces methane generation from landfills.

DANGERS OF BACKYARD BARREL BURNING



Open waste burning is prohibited or restricted by many local, state, and tribal governments because it is a health hazard. Backyard burning produces harmful quantities of toxic chemicals, including dioxins, that settle on crops and contaminate our waterways. These pollutants can eventually enter the food chain, posing significant threats to human health. Yet despite regulations, many people continue to engage in this harmful practice.

Excerpt from WMZ Evening News by science writer Katie Harice

". . . The representative from the national regulatory agency went on to say that incineration turns all the organic material into ash and gas, preventing the natural decomposition process carried out by microorganisms. As a result, valuable nutrients in the waste are lost and cannot be returned to the soil or ecosystem.

INCINERATION: WHAT'S THE GOOD NEWS?



- Incineration methods have improved with new technologies
- Scrubbers can be used to remove contaminants from flue gas before it is released into the air
- No odors or rodents
- Ash produced from incineration of solid waste, when properly treated, can be used for covering landfills for manufacturing construction and roadway materials. Additionally, metals extracted from this ash can be repurposed in the steel industry

LOCAL INCINERATOR INSTALLS SCRUBBERS

by Millie Moray
Community Cares Editor

In its continuing efforts to improve air quality for the surrounding community, HW Disposal has recently installed wet scrubbers in its incinerator chimney. Wet scrubbers help to reduce the amount of gas pollutants produced by incinerating waste. Large water droplets from the scrubbers capture small particles from a gas stream to remove them.

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