
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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WMD-SW-23

2011

Using Vehicle Registration Fees for Municipal Recycling

Since 1989, New Hampshire law (RSA 261:153) has allowed municipalities to establish a fund for collecting and disposing of residents' used tires, motor oil, and motor vehicle batteries. To raise money for this fund, called a **town reclamation trust fund**, municipalities may collect an additional amount when residents' vehicles are registered by the town or city clerk. The structure and allowed uses of these additional motor vehicle fees are provided below, along with an explanation of how towns can create a trust fund.

Fee Structure

- \$5 for heavy vehicles, including mobile homes and house trailers, heavy trucks, buses, and truck-tractors whose gross weight exceeds 18,000 pounds.
- \$3 for automobiles, light vehicles including trucks, and commercial motorized vehicles including tractor trailers.
- \$2 for all-terrain vehicles, agricultural and farm vehicles, historic vehicles, and two-wheeled vehicles including mopeds, motorcycles, and non-motorized car and boat trailers.

Use of Fees

- \$0.50 of each fee collected may be retained by the city or town to cover administrative costs.

The remaining amounts (\$4.50, \$2.50, \$1.50) shall be deposited into a reclamation trust fund established by the town for the purpose of paying for collection and disposal fees for the town's motor vehicle wastes. The town may use any excess monies in the fund for the purpose of recycling and reclamation of other types of solid waste.

If the additional fees are collected at the time of vehicle registration, the municipality may not charge an additional disposal fee for motor vehicle wastes brought to the municipality's solid waste disposal facility. If a registration fee is not charged on a particular vehicle, an additional disposal fee may be charged. However, when a fee is charged at the solid waste disposal facility, people may try to bring their motor vehicle wastes somewhere else in order to avoid that fee. This can lead to the improper abandonment of the wastes.

Setting up a Reclamation Trust Fund

As specified in RSA 31:19 towns may at any annual meeting grant and vote such sums of money as they deem necessary to create trust funds. Often these types of funds are set up and used for the maintenance and care of libraries, parks and cemeteries. All such trusts are to be administered by a board of trustees (for specifications see RSA 31:22-39). All that is required to establish a reclamation trust fund is passage of a warrant article at town meeting. To determine the amount of revenue that will be generated by imposing vehicle registration fees for recycling, towns can contact the NH Department of Safety and obtain a copy of the distribution of current vehicle registration by plate type.

Communities are urged to collect the fees and to establish a town recycling fund for the collection and reclamation of motor vehicle wastes. For information on statewide or regional recycling or disposal options, contact:

NH Department of Environmental Services
Solid Waste Technical Assistance Section
29 Hazen Drive; PO Box 95
Concord, NH 03302-0095
(603) 271-2925
TDD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964
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