

The Importance of Proper Sanitation:

Safeguarding Health &
Well-being

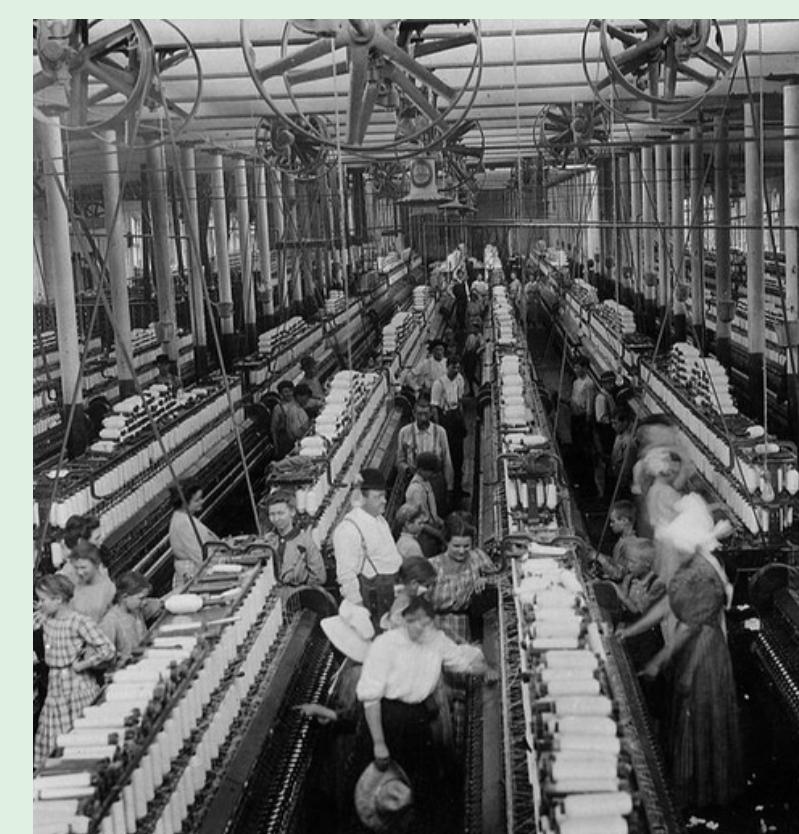
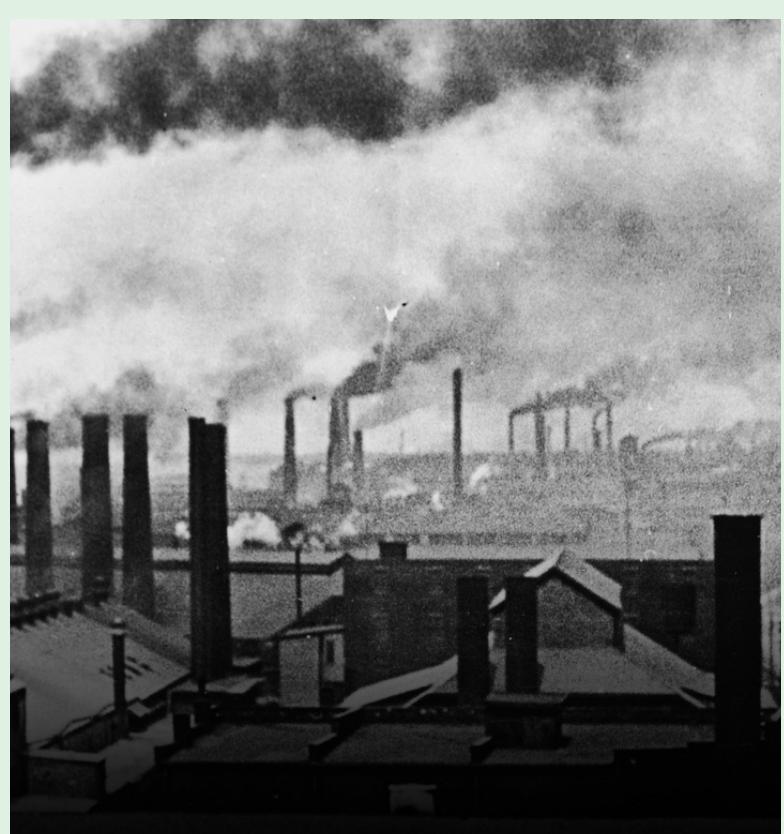


Historical Ties to the Victorian Era

During the Victorian Era, which spanned from 1837 to 1901, the management of solid waste in cities experienced significant changes, due to sanitary problems caused by the Industrial Revolution. This time period was characterized by rapid urbanization, when many individuals began moving to towns and cities. As cities began to experience this unexpected growth, severe sanitation problems arose. Diseases, like cholera and tuberculosis, spread like wildfire, affecting both the rich and poor alike. The rise of consumerism during the Victorian era also contributed to greater waste disposal issues, which were made worse by the introduction of packaged products. In response to these sanitary and disease-prone conditions, initiatives were launched to address growing public health concerns.

Epidemics and polluted waterways contributed to the creation of the first central authorities and sanitation laws that intended to address waste disposal issues. For example, the Public Health Act of 1875 required every household in London to dispose of their waste, which was then collected by horse drawn and open dump trucks, one to two times per week. Efforts to recycle various materials, such as coal ash, rags, tins, etc. were also on the rise and used as secondary resources in different industries.

While improper waste disposal still occurred, the Victorian era is marked by its shift towards more responsible waste management practices. Cities eventually became cleaner and healthier, thereby further protecting human health and well-being. This pattern laid the groundwork for later advancements in waste management throughout the 20th century, and shaped the systems we have in place today.



The Effect of Sanitation on Health

Improper disposal of waste can result in contamination of water, soil, and air, contributing to negative health outcomes for individuals and communities. Not only are waste workers endangered by hazardous waste and unsafe disposal methods, but so are neighboring populations.

Vulnerable groups, particularly children, are the most at risk for the negative effects of improper waste disposal. Poor waste disposal can also lead to environmental pollution and water contamination. These stagnant and polluted waterways can create breeding grounds for vector-borne diseases, like cholera and tuberculosis.



Relying on landfills as the only way to dispose of waste is unsustainable and puts community members at further risk for negative health outcomes. To avoid these consequences, consider recycling & composting as they provide greater benefits for human health.

Environmental contamination can lead to...

- Asthma
- Birth defects
- Cancers
- Cardiovascular diseases
- Reproductive problems
- Respiratory illnesses

accgov Solid Waste Department

The Solid Waste Department oversees a comprehensive waste management system that includes landfill, recycling, and composting facilities, with each of them having functions that protect human health.

Landfills

This “stream” manages landfill sites where non-recyclable and non-compostable waste is disposed of safely and efficiently. Workers ensure that waste is deposited and compacted correctly to minimize environmental impact and maximize the space in landfills.

The landfills adhere to strict regulatory guidelines to prevent pollution and protect surrounding ecosystems.

Recycling

This “stream” operates recycling facilities where recyclable materials, like paper, plastics, glass, and metals are sorted, processed, and prepared for reuse. Innovative sorting technologies and employees boost recycling efficiency diverting heaps of waste from landfills. Recycling decreases landfill and incinerator waste, preventing harmful toxin release and reducing health risks.



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Composting

Composting facilities managed by the department process organic waste materials such as food scraps, yard trimmings, and biodegradable materials. The natural decomposition process transforms organic waste into nutrient-rich compost, which can then be used to enrich soil and promote sustainable farming and landscaping. This alternative better protects human health. Composting is an alternative to landfill disposal and helps reduce the environmental impacts associated with landfilling, such as soil contamination.



WE'LL COMPOST YOUR FOOD SCRAPS!

Bring your food scraps to one of our free Compost Drop Sites! Food scraps are composted and used to help gardens and landscaping grow.

1. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

275 Cleveland Rd

4. CHARM*

1005 College Ave

2. UGA FACILITIES

Bowstrom Rd

5. SOLID WASTE OFFICE

725 Hancock Ind Way

3. UGARDEN

2500 S Milledge Ave

6. ACC LANDFILL*

5700 Lexington Rd

REMEMBER-

No plastic bags in the compost!

*Limited hours, check website.

*Limited

Benefits of Proper Waste Management

Public Health & Quality of Life

Effective waste management practices play an important role in protecting public health and well-being. By ensuring proper disposal, these practices help prevent disease transmission and minimize exposure to harmful substances. Also, efficient waste management reduces unpleasant odors, pests, and visual pollution, which can improve the aesthetics of communities and foster a sense of well-being. Composting also contributes to a more active lifestyle as many of the tasks require physical activity. The activity also promotes spending more time outdoors, which provides numerous benefits for physical, mental, and emotional well-being.



Environmental Protection & Pollution Reduction

Minimizing waste sent to landfills helps decrease the emission of greenhouse gasses, like methane, which can reduce the effects of climate change. Redirecting waste to recycling or composting facilities decreases the production of landfill leachate, a harmful liquid that can seep into soil and groundwater.

Implementing effective waste disposal and containment methods helps protect ecosystems and human health by preventing soil, water, and air contamination.



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