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## Waste Management Basics

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An essential goal of waste management is to dispose of waste without contaminating water, soil, and air. Many wastes are disposed of safely in engineered landfills, by incineration, and in [underground injection wells](#). All of these processes of waste management are monitored and regulated closely.<sup>[1]</sup> Waste management can also provide economic opportunity: generating [energy from landfill gas](#); recycling to produce new materials from [used plastic, paper, glass, or metal](#); or composting to produce rich soil from yard and food waste.

## Why does waste management matter?

Safe waste management is essential in a world with increasing amounts of waste – from plastic trash to industrial waste water. Without proper management, solid and water wastes can have a number of impacts on public health and ecosystems.

## How does geoscience help?

Geoscientists help design systems to dispose of waste safely – whether in the air, on the surface, or beneath the ground. They also help to locate safe sites for waste management and study the impacts of waste underground and at the surface.

## References

<sup>1</sup>Environmental Protection Agency, "Summary of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act", <https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-resource-conservation-and-recovery-act>, accessed May 18, 2017

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- [The Science of Waste Management](#) (Fact Sheet - PDF), *Waste Management, Inc.*  
A fact sheet on the science of landfill management and the use of methane gas, a by-product of trash decomposition, as an energy source.

## Resources for Educators

- Education Resources Network, *AGI's Center for Geoscience & Society*  
Search for waste management resources in: [Professional Resources](#), [Organizations](#), [Curricula & Instruction](#), [Outreach Programs](#)
- NGSS Performance Expectations, *Next Generation Science Standards*  
[K-ESS3-3](#), [5-ESS3-1](#), [MS-ESS3-3](#), [MS-ESS3-4](#), [HS-ESS3-3](#), [HS-ESS3-4](#)
- NGSS [Disciplinary Core Ideas](#), *Next Generation Science Standards*  
ESS3.C

## Frequently Asked Questions

### [What is biomining?](#)

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### [What is produced water?](#)

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### [How does recycling save energy?](#)

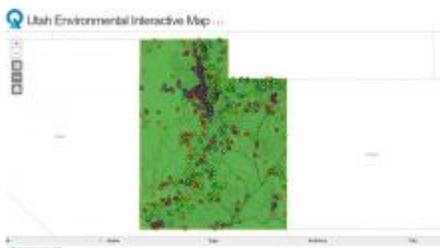
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### [What are underground injection wells used for?](#)

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Do you have a question that's not listed here? [Search all FAQs](#)

## Maps & Visualizations



### [Interactive map of environmental monitoring and management in Utah](#)

Utah Department of Environmental Quality

The Utah Department of Environmental Quality provides a large amount of environmental monitoring and management information in interactive map form. The Utah Environmental

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