

waste – can you handle it?

New rules on business waste

This introductory guide is aimed at business managers with limited experience in managing waste. It is an introduction to the new rules, what they mean and what you need to do to meet your new legal requirements. The new rules will give greater protection to the environment and health.

What this means for your business

Every business has a legal Duty of Care to ensure its waste is disposed of safely. The new rules are tougher, so you will have to give more thought to the different types of waste you produce and how each should be disposed of.

Certain wastes are classified as hazardous – a very broad term for a wide range of substances that present different levels of risk. Some present a serious and immediate threat to the population and the environment, for example those which are toxic, could cause cancer or infectious disease. Others, such as fluorescent tubes or cathode ray tubes in televisions, pose little immediate threat but may cause long term damage over a period of time.

Any business already handling high-risks wastes should already be working with their waste contractor to dispose of them safely.

What you need to do

- Think about the range of wastes your business generates. Hazardous wastes will need to be collected and disposed of separately.
- If you produce hazardous wastes you will need to notify us so we can register you as a producer. Your waste contractor may be able to do this for you.
- Ask your waste contractor how they will be collecting the types of waste you produce.
- Some wastes will need to be sampled, tested and described for your waste contractor – this is called ‘characterisation’ – it ensures that the waste will be disposed of the correct way.
- Think about how to reduce the amount of waste your business creates – producing less will make life easier and could save you money.

How to classify waste

Wastes are identified as hazardous or non-hazardous and listed in a technical document called the European Waste Catalogue (EWC), which provides a code number for each type of waste. You will need to identify each waste that you produce according to the appropriate code number from the EWC – the codes for hazardous wastes are marked with an asterisk.

Your waste contractor will be able to assist you in this – they need to know the code so they can dispose of the waste correctly.

To learn more about hazardous waste and determine whether a waste is hazardous or not, you can refer to our guidance 'WM2 – Hazardous Waste: Interpretation of the Definition and Classification of Hazardous Waste'.

We have also produced a set of individual guides for the most common waste types.

To find out more call us on 08708 506 506 or visit our website:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/newrulesonwaste

Other sources of help:

- **Your current waste management service provider** – but be sure they have the expertise to advise you on hazardous waste.
- **The Environmental Services Association (ESA)** – the trade body for waste management companies. Contact ESA on 020 7824 8882 or visit www.esauk.org
- **NetRegs.gov.uk** – The NetRegs website explains, using plain language, the legal environmental obligations for small and medium sized businesses UK-wide, and suggests practical steps to achieve compliance. Visit www.netregs.gov.uk to protect your business and the environment.
- **Envirowise** – The Government's Envirowise Programme offers small businesses a free and confidential "fastrack" waste minimisation audit. Its Environment and Energy helpline is Freephone 0800 585794 or visit: www.envirowise.gov.uk
- **Letsrecycle** – an independent news web site for business and a good source of information relating to changes in legislation. It also includes a searchable database of UK Waste Management Companies, visit: www.letsrecycle.com
- **The Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM)** – the professional body for waste managers offers simple "waste explained" advice and links to sources of support and information: www.ciwm.co.uk