

### Treating non-hazardous wastes for landfill

This fact sheet is for local authorities involved in the disposal of municipal solid waste (MSW) at landfills.

#### What treatment is needed for MSW?

From 30 October 2007, landfills designed for inert or non-hazardous waste can no longer accept untreated waste. This requirement already applies to hazardous waste.

Local authorities are responsible for managing MSW. There are statutory targets for diverting this waste from landfill and in England there are also statutory recycling and composting targets. Local authorities face heavy penalties and government action if these targets are not met. The ways of meeting these targets mean that the MSW stream is already being pre-treated and we regard any residual wastes going to landfill as treated waste.

#### Why must waste be treated?

The requirements to treat waste and to divert biodegradable municipal waste from landfill are part of a package of measures applied across Europe by the Landfill Directive. These are designed to:

- Increase waste recycling and recovery.
- Reduce potentially polluting emissions from landfills.

#### How should Waste Collection Authorities and Waste Disposal Authorities meet the new requirements?

They should continue to develop and implement their municipal waste management strategies (MWMS)<sup>1</sup> or service delivery plans in Wales. No extra action is necessary just to meet the treatment requirement. However we support any action that increases the amount of waste recovered and minimises the impact of landfilled waste on the environment.

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<sup>1</sup> MWMS are plans that set out how much waste each authority will be responsible for managing and how they intend to do that according to government policy and targets.

## Frequently asked questions

### ***What is MSW?***

Municipal solid waste (MSW) means household waste and any commercial or industrial waste collected by the waste collection authority or its agents. It includes collected household waste, street cleaning and litter, bulky household and civic amenity waste, commercial and industrial waste collected by or on behalf of the authority under section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, waste from council premises, parks and gardens waste, beach cleaning waste and fly-tipping clearance.

### ***If we collect trade waste along with household waste, must it be treated?***

If a local authority is collecting trade waste as part of its MSW collections it will be regarded as treated even if it is separately collected. However, it is good practice for the authority to consider whether the waste could be recycled or recovered before deciding to consign it to landfill.

### ***In England, will the Environment Agency be checking our MWMS?***

Not specifically for pre-treatment arrangements. We will continue our regulatory role in operating the LATS scheme.

### ***Will the Environment Agency be checking whether we meet our targets?***

Not specifically for pre-treatment. We will continue our role in operating the LATS and LAS schemes in England and Wales.

### ***Will the Environment Agency be checking that treatment facilities have been built?***

No, we think there are enough drivers in place (such as LATS and the landfill tax) to ensure that the facilities are built.

### ***In England, what if we buy landfill allowances, rather than treat our residual waste?***

We will still regard the MSW as treated. The Landfill Allowance market would be undermined if waste still had to be treated despite buying allowances.

### ***As a landfill operator, how can I check that MSW has been treated?***

Landfilled municipal waste can be regarded as treated waste that does not require further treatment. This means landfill operators do not need to make checks on municipal waste.

If other (non-municipal) wastes are added during transport or transfer of the MSW then verification procedures at the receiving site should detect any obviously non-municipal material. While non-municipal material may be acceptable under the landfill permit it must be treated before landfilling. If not pre-treated it should be handled in the same way as other non-permitted wastes.

### ***Where can I get more advice?***

Extensive advice on managing MSW, including MWMS development, LATS, LAS and treatment technologies is available on the Defra, Welsh Assembly Government and Environment Agency websites:

- <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/index.htm>
- [http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/epq/waste\\_recycling/?lang=en](http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/epq/waste_recycling/?lang=en)
- <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/wtd/>
- [http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/444217/444663/landfill/1693182/986852/?version=1&lang=\\_e](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/444217/444663/landfill/1693182/986852/?version=1&lang=_e)

**customer services line**  
**08708 506506**

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)