

Hazardous waste management

When it comes to dealing with hazardous waste as a business, it's important that your organisation implements an effective waste management. If hazardous waste doesn't get handled in the right way, it can be harmful to humans as well as the environment.

Hazardous waste presents itself in many forms, including solids, liquids, gases and sludges; in these forms, it can regularly contaminate surface and groundwater supplies. The UK government have strict direction on how businesses should be handling their hazardous waste. Together, with providers of skip hire, Reconomy, we give you this guide that will ensure that you're managing these wastes the appropriate manner.

Waste classification

If you're producing or carrying hazardous waste, the UK government expects that you have a 'duty of care', which means that you are required to handle and identify your waste responsibly.

When identifying waste, you need to base on the following two conditions: : it is harmful to humans, or, it is damaging to the environment. There are many examples of hazardous waste, but the most common include the following:

- Asbestos
- Batteries
- Chemicals such as brake fluid and printer toner
- Equipment that contain ozone depleting substances
- Oils such as car oil
- Pesticides
- Solvents

As a company handling waste, if you identify any of the above, then it should be stored separately to the other waste that you produce within your organisation.

Correctly storing waste

Before you do this, it's important that you attempt every possibility to reduce the amount of waste you produce. Although not exclusive to these types, waste, and hazardous waste can be categorised within four main sub-categories:

- Industry
- Agriculture
- Demolition
- Construction

Once you've minimised the amount of waste that your business is producing, you should aim to store the hazardous waste in a secure location, and all containers should be able to stop waste escaping. When storing waste that is hazardous, it should be labelled accordingly, so that everyone on-site can identify it as such. In terms of contamination, waterproof covers should be used so that hazardous substances do not run off onto the floor or any other areas.

You should store all hazardous waste separately, and if the waste is a liquid, a barrier or bund should be put in place in order to stop spillages or leakages. When these materials are being stored onsite, employees should regularly check storage areas for damaged containers, or any other potential risks that may harm employees or the surrounding environment.

Finally, keep a record of the hazardous waste that is on your premises and where it is being stored. This means if any incident does occur, the emergency services can deal with it effectively and safely.

The collection of hazardous waste

Once hazardous waste has been collected and taken away from the premises, you will need to complete a consignment note. This is an important part of hazardous waste collection as business owners need to be able to account for waste that enters and leaves their business.

Consignment notes are required for hazardous waste for the following:

- When another business has produced waste, movements from customer premises.
- Movements from one premises to another within the same organisation.
- Collections from businesses that are registered waste carriers.

A consignment note is not needed in the following scenarios:

- Waste has been imported and exported under international waste shipment controls that require a different movement note.
- The movement of domestic hazardous waste – other than asbestos.

Giving details of your hazardous waste

For the waste to be removed, you will need to provide details of the waste that you want disposed of in your consignment note. This will allow the hazardous waste handlers to be able to remove it, in more efficiently

Description of waste

You will need to give description of all types of waste or hazardous waste that you want taken away.

The amount of waste

You will need to provide the total weight in Kilo's of your hazardous waste, and for any liquids, they need to be converted into the appropriate volumes – ensuring that they are reliable measurements.

Chemical components

The chemical and biological composition of the waste materials will need to be identified before you dispose of it, which should include hazardous and non-hazardous waste.

Physical form of your waste

Enter a form that best describes the waste that you're disposing of: gas, liquid, solid, powder, sludge, or mixed.

Once your consignment note has been completed, this needs to be paid for. In England and Wales, the charge is £10 for a single collection. If this collection is a milk round (multiple collections), then this is reduced to £5 per note. Depending on applicability, the fee is set at £15 in Northern Ireland and Scotland.