

Waste management



There is an array of complex legislation applicable to environmental and waste matters, and different parts of the UK have variations in how this is applied.

A common theme in legislation concerning environmental and waste matters is the statutory duty of care applying to anyone who produces, stores, or transports waste.

They must keep it safe and make sure anyone who carries waste is authorised to take it and will transport, recycle or dispose of it safely.

The legislation is concerned with protecting human health and the environment, though reducing and better managing waste also supports the control of many fire and health and safety risks, such as arson and slips and trips. Businesses with effective waste management often have more efficient operations and safer working environments, from which they reap financial savings

Key actions for effective management of waste

- Serious appreciation of a business's impact on the environment must be supported from the top. A senior director or manager should be appointed to lead initiatives, like waste reduction, monitor progress and make it a permanent agenda item for board meetings.
- Establish an Environmental Management System (EMS). It's an effective way to demonstrate an ethical commitment and contribute to controlling waste, waste disposal and sustainable development.
- Use [WRAP's waste hierarchy](#) to help you understand the 'pyramid' of duties set out by the EU Waste Framework Directive (and included in the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011, Waste (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 and other relevant UK legislation).
 - Waste should be prevented as much as possible, options for re-use are to then be explored, followed by recycling, recovery (e.g. incineration for energy recovery) and lastly, when all other options are exhausted, disposal.

- Complete a tour of your premises, looking at storage and processes, and use the information gained to consider ways to reduce and better manage waste produced and stored on site.
 - Set improvement targets, goals and get the whole business involved in reducing the amount of waste.
- Encourage workers to voice concerns, or ideas for improvements, relating to waste management and maintain housekeeping standards.
- Develop a cost-benefit analysis if it is thought that modernising plant, machinery, vehicles, equipment, etc. will reduce the amount of waste produced (and provide efficiency based savings).
- Make sure you have permits, where needed, for the types of waste produced, stored and moved by your organisation.
- Have appropriate procedures in place for the selection and vetting of waste contractors, to confirm [duty of care responsibilities](#) are carried out.
- Keep records for disposing of waste, including transfer notes. Consider using the [Electronic Duty of Care system \(edoc\)](#), set up by environmental regulators across the UK.
- Segregate waste during storage with suitable, safe and secure containers that are appropriately marked.
- For liquid waste storage areas, decide what is needed to contain a leak or spill. For some liquid waste tanks/containers, secondary containment will be a legal requirement.
- Identify hazardous or special waste materials produced in your premises (e.g. chemicals like brake fluid and printer toner, solvents, batteries, electrical equipment and asbestos) and the waste classification for each type.
 - Check to see what extra or different duties you may have and whether you need to register with the appropriate regulator before arranging for a permitted/licensed collection.
 - Get an independent environmental and ecological survey carried out, or source specialist advice, if your business handles waste that might need special control measures.
- Arrange for employees carrying out waste activities to have access to all of the information, instruction, training and personal protective equipment needed.
- Continually monitor the situation regarding waste management and associated controls, completing regular audits and reviews.