

UNDERSTANDING YOUR HAZARDOUS WASTE

WasteSURE

0333 301 0705

mark@wastesure.com

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www.wastesure.com



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INTRODUCTION

Companies that produce hazardous waste have a duty of care to dispose of it safely. Because hazardous waste is, by its nature, a problematic substance that could cause harm or damage, it is incredibly important that it is properly identified, stored and disposed of. Failing to fulfil your duty of care with hazardous waste could have serious consequences so understanding the basics is key to keeping everyone safe.

Contrary to popular belief, disposing of hazardous waste doesn't have to be expensive or complicated. All you need to do is follow a set of simple rules and there shouldn't be a problem. In fact, once you know what the basic rules are, you will be in a good position to outsource all your waste responsibilities to a reputable professional waste management company.

WHAT IS HAZARDOUS WASTE?

As the name suggests, hazardous waste is waste that may cause harm to humans, animals or the environment either immediately or over a period of time. This is an important definition to remember because it means that even if something seems okay, if it could cause damage later on, it must still be classified as hazardous now.

It is also important to recognise that some products may not be regarded as hazardous before becoming waste because they are in a controlled environment. A good example of this is the use of pesticides. You may wish to use pesticides on crops in small doses to improve the yield, but used anywhere, the pesticide could be a hazard to the environment. Once it becomes a waste product, any pesticide is regarded as hazardous waste.

EXAMPLE

A good example of a product treated as hazardous waste is asbestos.

When an old building is being pulled down, the builders may find asbestos. In its solid form, asbestos is usually not regarded as a hazardous product. However, if the asbestos is broken up, it will become hazardous. This is why all asbestos is regarded as hazardous waste and treated as such.



WHAT PRODUCES HAZARDOUS WASTE?

Many different industries produce hazardous waste including manufacturing, agriculture, construction and water treatment. Hazardous waste might also be a consequence of moving premises; for example, if you were to move into an old office and have it completely refitted, you may produce asbestos, a hazardous waste.

If you aren't sure whether you are producing hazardous waste, you should definitely check as soon as possible. This is a very simple process: all you need to do is get your waste analysed by an independent company and they will be able to assign you a waste code. This will determine whether the waste is hazardous or not.



WHAT IS THE LIST OF WASTES?

All waste is given a code. This code is applied so that the waste can be identified by everyone involved but it also gives directions for the proper disposal of the waste.

The List of Wastes (based on the EWC Codes) contains the code for every single type of waste. It is separated into sections according to where the waste has come from. This makes it easier to identify waste, but you should also use an independent waste analysis company to test the waste if you cannot be sure of the exact composition of waste on sight.

Hazardous waste codes are easily identified with an asterisk.



WHAT ARE THE HAZARDOUS WASTE CATEGORIES

- **HP 1** EXPLOSIVE
- **HP 2** OXIDIZING
- **HP 3** FLAMMABLE
- **HP 4** IRRITANT
- **HP 5** SPECIFIC TARGET ORGAN TOXICITY/ASPIRATION TOXICITY (STOT)
- **HP 6** ACUTE TOXICITY
- **HP 7** CARCINOGENIC
- **HP 8** CORROSIVE
- **HP 9** INFECTIOUS
- **HP 10** TOXIC FOR REPRODUCTION
- **HP 11** MUTAGENIC
- **HP 12** PRODUCES TOXIC GASES IN CONTACT WITH WATER, AIR OR ACID
- **HP 13** SENSITISING
- **HP 14** ECOTOXIC
- **HP 15** CAPABLE OF EXHIBITING A HAZARDOUS PROPERTY LISTED ABOVE NOT DIRECTLY DISPLAYED BY THE ORIGINAL WASTE
- **HP 16** PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS

As you can see, to dispose of any of these types of waste in a regular landfill, for example, would be highly irresponsible as the consequences could be disastrous should anything go wrong.

These codes are mainly used by companies involved with the transfer and disposal of hazardous waste to inform their treatment of the waste. For example, companies transporting irritants may instruct their staff to use safety glasses and gloves while handling the waste.

HOW SHOULD HAZARDOUS WASTE BE STORED?

There are two things to think about when storing hazardous waste:

1

Is the container suitable for the hazardous waste?

2

Is the container labelled properly to inform people of the contents?

Generally speaking, most sites use COSHH and drum stores to hold hazardous waste. These are secure ways to ensure that the waste cannot affect the rest of the site and, as they can be locked, are safe, secure storage solutions. Both COSHH and drum stores must be bunded to contain any accidental leakages.

COSHH stores are used to contain hazardous liquids including solvents, chemicals and any other flammable liquids. A drum store may be used for storing solid hazardous wastes. Common examples include aerosol cans, paint tins, mastics and oily rags, all of which may be found on a building site.

According to government guidelines, all stored waste should be appropriately labelled so that anyone approaching knows what is contained within and how is it hazardous. An external noticeboard on any COSHH or drum store is usually the best solution for keeping track of all the different kinds of hazardous waste stored inside. This will help you to maintain an inventory, but it will also provide the emergency services with a detailed list should they be required to attend.

You must not store non-hazardous waste with hazardous waste. This is prohibited by law.

HOW SHOULD HAZARDOUS WASTE BE DISPOSED?



Storing hazardous waste like this is always a temporary solution and you should aim to have the waste removed from your site as soon as possible.

You must make sure that you follow your duty of care and check that the registered waste carrier who takes your waste (and receives it) has the correct licence and is able to collect and transport your hazardous waste. Each type of hazardous waste has its own code and the waste carrier's licence must state this code for them to transport the waste legally. There is no generic licence covering all hazardous waste, so you must check that they are able to transport your hazardous waste type in particular.

Your duty of care is just as stringent with hazardous waste as it is with regular waste - if not more so. To ensure that you are carrying out your duty of care, there must be a written record of the composition of the hazardous waste and its movements. This is to keep track of the waste and ensure that it is managed and disposed of safely. A consignment note is used for this purpose.

Each party coming into contact with the waste must fill out a section of the consignment note. So, a hazardous waste producer will fill out sections A and B (where the waste is coming from and going to, and what it is composed of) and then any other sections will be filled out by others. Section C would be filled out by the carrier and Section D by the Consignor.



CAN HAZARDOUS WASTE BE RECYCLED

Though you don't need to be involved with the actual disposal of the hazardous waste beyond your duty of care, if you are interested, there are a few options for disposal including recycling.

Of course, not all hazardous waste can be recycled, but if there are separable recyclable components, they may be recovered once the hazardous element has been removed. For example, if a paint tin can be thoroughly cleaned out, the metal can be recycled to produce something new.

Many hazardous wastes that can't be recycled are used in waste recovery. This involves burning the hazardous material in a secure environment such as a cement kiln to produce energy. This is a popular method as it diverts hazardous waste from landfill and puts it to good use.

The final method for disposal is in secure landfill. This is a last resort for any materials that cannot be recycled or used in energy recovery.




HOW CAN WASTESURE HELP WITH YOUR HAZARDOUS WASTE?

At WasteSURE, we believe that hazardous waste should be simple for companies to dispose of safely and within their duty of care. We will handle all the storage, transport and disposal of your hazardous waste for you, so that you can concentrate on your business in full peace of mind that your waste is in the right hands.

We offer practical advice to help you manage your hazardous waste and can ensure that you fulfill your duty of care. We will ensure that all the companies involved are properly permitted and can fit with your tight schedule.



DIFFICULT
TAKES A DAY,
IMPOSSIBLE
TAKES A WEEK

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We Do
Things
Differently
Here