



Waste Management

INTRODUCTION

In any food business, it is essential that there are adequate systems in place for the collection, collation and disposal of waste material, and the compliance with all legal requirements.

Food waste, inedible by-products and other waste materials can be a significant source of microbiological and physical contamination of food. Care must be taken to ensure that waste products do not re-enter the food chain. Waste material is a potential source of food for pests, which may give rise to further microbiological contamination. Such hazards could cause illness or injury to consumers and so must be prevented or minimised.

In addition, the Government's Food Industry Sustainability Strategy or FISS calls for a 15-20% reduction in the manufacturing industry's own wastes by 2010 along with commitments from the whole industry to contribute to packaging and product design and recycling.

LEGISLATION

Any substance or object that a business discards, intend to discard, or is required to discard is waste and is subject to legal requirements, including 'a duty of care'. Even if material is sent for recycling or undergoes treatment in house, it can still be waste. Commercial, industrial, household wastes and Special Wastes are classified as 'controlled waste'. The Duty of Care applies to all 'Controlled Waste'.



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The Waste Management Duty of Care requires that businesses ensure all waste is handled, recovered or disposed of responsibly, that it is only handled, recovered or disposed of by individuals or businesses that are authorised to do so, and that a record is kept of all wastes received or transferred through a system of signed Waste Transfer Notes.

Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs and Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin came into force in all member states on 1 January 2006. They are enforced by the Food Hygiene (England) regulations 2005 in England and by similar legislation in Scotland and Wales. These require:

- 1) food waste, non-edible by-products and other refuse are to be removed from rooms where food is present as quickly as possible, so as to avoid their contamination;
- 2) food waste, non-edible by-products and other refuse are to be deposited in closable containers, unless food business operators can demonstrate to the competent authority that other types of containers or evacuation systems used are appropriate. These containers are to be of an appropriate construction, kept in sound condition, be easy to clean and where necessary, to disinfect;
- 3) adequate provision is to be made for the storage and disposal of food waste, non-edible by-products and other refuse. Refuse stores are to be designed and managed in such a way as to enable them to be kept clean and, where necessary, free of animals and pests; and
- 4) all waste is to be eliminated in a hygienic and environmentally friendly way in accordance with Community legislation applicable to that effect, and is not to constitute a direct or indirect source of contamination.



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The treatment/disposal of unwanted by-products (waste materials) must be controlled and comply with all the appropriate environmental legislation in the country concerned. In the UK waste disposal should meet all relevant national and EC legislation. Where necessary, waste should be removed by licensed contractors. If the waste includes trademarked materials the waste contractor should provide records of material destruction or disposal.

The EC Directive on Packaging Waste (94/62/EC) aims to reduce the volume of packaging going to land fill sites by setting targets for the recovery and recycling of packaging waste. The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 1997 ensure that producers or users of packaging have the responsibility of disposal and are responsible for costs on the environment.

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Suitable and sufficient refuse and waste containers should be provided and emptied at appropriate frequencies and maintained in an adequately clean condition.

If substandard trademarked materials are transferred to a third party for destruction or disposal, that third party shall be in the business of appropriate waste disposal and shall provide records of material destruction. Formal confirmation of a contractors ability to perform controlled destruction of trademarked waste should be held where relevant.

Where appropriate, the third party waste disposal contractor shall be licensed. Copies of official registration details, licenses, duty of care details of other documents should be maintained.

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Waste management protocols should address:

- Waste minimisation
- Reusing the material wherever possible
- Waste recycling using approved contractors and waste disposal

Waste minimisation audits should identify ways to prevent waste being produced in the manufacturing areas. They should address the following as appropriate:

- Raw material use and actual use versus expected yield;
- Level of non-conforming/rejected product;
- Level of waste by-products produced per unit of production;
- Potable water consumption per unit of production;
- Energy consumption per unit of production;
- Packaging usage and volume of packaging waste produced per unit of production;
- Chemical usage; and
- Sundry and consumable items.



Where do I get more information?

Your waste contractor should be the first port of call. Reputable contractors will not object to requests for more information and the larger companies will almost certainly have pre printed material to answer many of your questions.

If you wish to check on the carrier or the final disposer then the address of your Waste Regulation Authority will be found in the telephone book, otherwise check with the Environment Agency.

Remember there are other simple steps you can take as well. If waste is significant in your business, apart from meeting the regulatory requirements you should be asking:

- Have you an accurate assessment of how much you are producing and where?
- Have you exhausted all possible channels to minimise your waste production?
- Have you taken all possible steps to recycle your waste where it is of sufficient quality?

All these steps can help you minimise any potential environmental or commercial damage as a waste producer and to meet your statutory Duty of Care to the community.