

- You already have a 'Duty of Care'¹ to ensure that you describe your waste properly and only give it to an authorised person. You should also take all reasonable steps to ensure that it is disposed of at an authorised facility. From 30 October 2007, when you transfer waste to someone else, you should tell them whether the waste has been treated or not. It is good practice to fill out a written declaration and to keep a copy.

Examples of 'treatment'

- A florist decides to keep paper and cardboard for recycling. They also decide to look at whether they can have any old flowers composted.
- A small bakery already keeps clean paper and cardboard separate for recycling. As part of their existing environmental management system they have identified an opportunity to start recycling plastic as well.
- A plumbing firm decides to keep any metal separate for recycling by a scrapyards. They might also be able to get any rubble they produce separated for hardcore by a contractor.
- A restaurant decides to separate glass from general waste and send it for recycling. The restaurant might also be able to keep clean cardboard packaging for recycling.

Flowchart of decisions – what should you do?



*Waste Management in the UK is changing rapidly, and you should regularly review it whether you could choose a better option for treating and disposing of it.

¹The Environmental Protection (Duty of Care) Regulations 1991

Some commonly asked questions

What is the purpose of treatment?

Treatment is intended to encourage us to recycle more and reduce the impact of the waste that continues to be landfilled.

What does 'treatment' mean?

The legal definition of treatment requires three things (the 'three-point test'):

1. It must be a physical, thermal, chemical or biological process including sorting.
2. It must change the characteristics of the waste.
3. It must do so in order to:
 - (a) reduce its volume, or
 - (b) reduce its hazardous nature, or
 - (c) facilitate its handling, or
 - (d) enhance its recovery.

Is source segregation an acceptable treatment option?

Segregation is equivalent to sorting. Both are acceptable treatments, provided that a reasonable amount of the sorted or separated materials are not set to landfill. Treating or recovering some of the waste is necessary to reduce the volume landfilled or enhance recovery.

Is compaction a treatment?

No, a squashed cardboard box has the same potential for impact on health or the environment as a cardboard box.

What happens if I share a skip with other businesses on site?

Check whether the waste is sent to landfill. If it is, talk with the other businesses on site about the opportunities that exist to treat the waste on site. You can also speak to your landlord about the possibility of providing an alternative arrangement, such as separate bins. This could help you avoid paying for further treatment if your waste is mixed with someone else's untreated waste.

Also, if your collector intends to take the waste to landfill, they will need to make sure that all the waste has been treated. Otherwise they will have to take it to a treatment facility.

Where can I get more advice?

- More advice can be found in *Treatment of non hazardous wastes for landfill*.²
- Talk to your waste contractor about what opportunities are available for your waste.
- Your trade association should be able to help you.
- Free government-supported environmental consultation, advice, and documentation for UK businesses is available from *Envirowise*.³
- Advice for businesses on complying with environmental legislation is provided by Netregs.⁴

²<http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/GEHO0207BLWJ-e-e.pdf>

³www.envirowise.gov.uk

⁴www.netregs.gov.uk