

## **Further clarification regarding hazardous waste and domestic bulky waste collections (January 2006)**

In a letter sent to heads of waste management at all local authorities in England in December 2005, Sue Ellis, Head of Defra's Waste Management Division, clarified the requirements of the Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2005 on domestic waste.

The guidance focused on items of hazardous waste taken to household waste recycling centres or collected as part of bulky waste collections. The letter confirmed that small amounts of domestic waste that are placed in the normal door to door domestic waste collections by members of the public are not subject to the regulations.

However, there are a number of situations where the regulations do apply to domestic waste, as the guidance confirmed:

- "Items of hazardous waste (such as a TV) taken to a civic amenity site, will be subject to the Regulations from the civic amenity site onwards".
- "Where hazardous waste is collected as part of the mixed municipal waste collection, but later separated for any reason, the separated hazardous waste must be treated as a separately collected fraction and the Regulations will apply."
- "Hazardous waste from domestic premises that is discarded separately from the normal door to door mixed domestic waste collection will be subject to the Regulations, but only once it has been taken to a central collection point."

The letter also referred readers to the CIWM-NHHWF Haz Guide for further guidance on management of waste at household waste recycling centres.

Further clarification was offered regarding the impact of the regulations on local authority services where hazardous items are collected in the same vehicle as other items (but not as part of the normal mixed door to door collection), eg bulky waste collections.

- "Where a vehicle collecting the hazardous item is also collecting other waste, for example, a vehicle collecting fridges, sofas and beds from domestic premises and transporting them to a collection point, the hazardous waste, in this case the fridges, will be subject to the Regulations from that collection point onwards."

Defra's December 2005 guidance implies that hazardous items collected on the same vehicle as other items on a bulky waste collection should be separated on arrival at a central collection point: these items are subject to the Regulations from this point onwards.

However, the NHHWF is aware of a number of local authorities that use Refuse Compaction Vehicles (RCVs) or tipping vehicles to collect hazardous items, eg TVs and monitors, as part of bulky waste collection rounds. This sort of collection is likely to lead to items becoming irretrievably mixed with the rest of the waste collected through breakage, ie through compaction in the vehicle, or when tipped from a vehicle onto a depot floor and moved to storage bays using mechanical shovels. In these circumstances, it would not be possible to separate hazardous items as stated in Defra's guidance.

The NHHWF sought further clarification from Defra on this situation. Defra's view is that it is not permissible under the regulations for local authorities to collect identifiable hazardous items in a way which means that they cannot be separated from other waste at a separate collection point. In other words, if a member of the public requests a collection of a hazardous bulky item (such as a TV or computer monitor) then this should not be collected using an RCV or tipping vehicle.

This implies that many local authorities may need to reorganise their bulky waste collection services to meet the requirements of the Hazardous Waste Regulations.

Further guidance on the ban on mixing hazardous waste under the regulations is available at: [www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/special/pdf/hwrmixing-guide.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/special/pdf/hwrmixing-guide.pdf)