

Facilities Management from A to Z

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Every facility produces waste and the Facility Manager is usually the person responsible for managing its removal. Waste can be anything that the organisation produces that is no longer required. This may include materials destined for further use. It is estimated that 84 million tonnes of waste are produced by UK commerce and industry each year.

Under the Environmental Protection Act section 34 and the Waste Management Duty of Care Code of Practice, any organisation creating waste has a legal responsibility to ensure that waste is kept safe, stored appropriately and disposed of properly. There are a number of other specific regulations governing the management of Hazardous waste, Packaging waste, Construction waste and Electrical and Electronic Equipment.

All waste must be stored securely in appropriate containers, such as skips or labelled drums. They should be covered if necessary to prevent the waste blowing away, and care should be taken to ensure that waste cannot leak into the ground or watercourses. Different types of waste may need to be separated, for example to prevent chemicals reacting together if they leak. Different types of hazardous waste should not be stored together and hazardous waste should not be mixed with non-hazardous waste or with materials that are not waste.

When waste is sent to be recovered or disposed of, it must be handled by an authorised organisation, such as the local authority or a registered contractor, and it must be taken to an authorised site. When waste is transferred to another person or organisation, a valid waste transfer note (WTN) must be produced. Individual WTNs can be used for each transfer, or a 'season ticket' used to cover repeated transfers of the same type of waste to the same handler. WTNs must be retained for at least two years.

Effective waste management policies focus not only on the issues involved in ensuring compliance with waste regulation and disposing of waste efficiently but also on the reduction of waste in the first place. Avoiding the creation of waste is the most sustainable of waste management techniques.

It has been demonstrated that companies could save 1% of their turnover by implementing a systematic waste minimisation programme. Waste minimisation often results in substantial savings through reduced purchasing costs and more efficient practices. It also has wider environmental benefits such as reduced energy consumption and pollution, conservation of natural resources and extension of valuable landfill capacity.

Further help and advice on waste management is available on the Envirowise website www.envirowise.gov.uk