



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Separate Waste Collection. Life after 2015

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Overview

From 2015 waste paper, plastic, metal and glass must be separately collected unless:

- A) it's not necessary to provide high quality recyclates;
- B) it's not technologically, environmentally or economically practicable.

All reasonable steps must be taken to keep separately collected waste separate (unless not necessary for high quality recyclates)

Legislative Background

- Article 11 of the revised Waste Framework Directive
- Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011.
- Waste (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2012.

What about co-mingling?

Co-mingling any of the four waste streams with one or more of the others is acceptable if either:

- the quality of the recyclate produced is similar to that achievable through separate collection; or
- it's not technically, economically or environmentally practicable to collect it separately.

Do I need to collect all plastics etc.?

WCAs need to separately collect or arrange for the separate collection of as much paper, plastic, glass and metal as is practicable.

This duty also applies to WDAs collecting at civic amenity sites and to contractors collecting on their behalf.

The requirements are not an on-off switch. You should implement the best environmental option which is practicable.

When is separate collection generally necessary?

- You should look at how well your MRF can separate co-mingled waste.
- Hybrid solutions may be appropriate – e.g. paper, plastic and metal together with glass separately.
- Pay particular attention to glass as glass that is co-mingled with other waste streams is generally of lower quality, and can be a significant contaminant.

What does practicability mean?

- Valid reasons for deciding that something is not practicable are:
 - there's no proven way to do it;
 - the negative environmental effects outweigh the ecological benefits;
 - separate collection causes excessive, disproportionate costs even when the value of the recyclates are taken into consideration.
- Co-mingling cannot be justified purely on the grounds that that is what residents or the authority would like.

In practical terms please

- The largest barriers are likely to be associated with:
 - Changes to existing contracts and infrastructure;
 - Congested streets, flats and houses of multiple occupation;
 - Very dispersed communities with low waste arisings.

What are the legal ramifications?

Arrangements for collecting waste can be judicially reviewed.

The Environment Agency can issue stop or improvement notices.

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