



LINCOLNSHIRE WASTE PARTNERSHIP

28 March 2024

SUBJECT :	Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Update
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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What are POPs?

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) are highly toxic chemical substances that present a serious health threat to both humans and wildlife. In domestic seating, POPs are present in the form of brominated fire retardants. POPs can accumulate in the fatty tissue of humans and other living organisms for long periods of time and are resistant to degradation, which can cause harmful effects to human health and the environment.

Why the change in legislation?

The Stockholm convention of POPs was adopted in 2001 and came into force in 2004. Following this the UK Government implemented the Persistent Organic Pollutants Regulations in 2007. However, an investigation conducted by the Environment Agency in 2022 confirmed that there is a significant widespread presence of POPs in domestic seating items.

Since the introduction of the Persistent Organic Pollutant Regulations 2007, UK manufactures are banned from the use or sale of domestic seating products containing POPs, with UK manufacturers stopping producing items containing POPs in 2011. However domestic seating containing POPs was still being imported to the UK as late as 2019.

How to manage POPs in waste?

Domestic seating containing POPs cannot be processed for recycling or landfilled. It is highly imperative that these toxic chemicals are destroyed and removed from use. Domestic seating must be disposed of via incineration in compliance with the regulations.

DISCUSSIONS

In January 2023 the Environment Agency released a series of Regulatory Position Statements (RPS) on the management of POPs waste with two affecting members of the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership as follows:

- RPS 265: Temporary Storage of Waste Upholstered Seating Containing POPs
- RPS 266: Segregating Waste Upholstered Domestic Seating that may contain POPs at Household Waste Recycling Centres

In summary, the two RPSs have allowed Waste Disposal Authorities who comply with the requirements to continue to mix POPs and 'Bulky Waste' as long as its final destination is for incineration.

In addition, Waste Collection Authorities who comply with the requirements can also mix POPs and 'Bulky Waste' on their collection vehicles.

However, both RPSs will be withdrawn by the Environment Agency on the 30th November 2024. This will require the segregated collection of POPs, the segregated storage of POPs and the segregated onward haulage of POPs to its final destination for incineration. The Environment Agency have confirmed that the regulations will be enforced from 1st December 2024.

Next steps

A POPs procedure confirming Lincolnshire County Council's position on the RPSs and post RPS has been submitted to the Environment Agency. This confirms the intention to comply with RPSs in their current position and to confirm the authority will comply with the legislation following RPS withdrawal.

In order to comply, Lincolnshire County Council will require a number of new containers as well as additional compaction and signage at its HWRCs. In addition, the Waste Transfer Stations each require the introduction of retaining wall units to form a segregated storage bay for POPs. Procurement for the containers and compactors will commence in April 2024. The Waste Transfer Station modifications have already commenced, with the Louth station being completed in February 2024.

Further to the above, the LWP WCA members have confirmed to the Environment Agency that following RPS withdrawal they will introduce or modify existing collections in order to comply with the segregation requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper recommends that the LWP note the progress to date on ensuring compliance with the Persistent Organic Pollutant Regulations 2007.