

Glossary of Terms

Anaerobic decomposition	The microbial breakdown of waste in the absence of air. The decay process produces methane, carbon dioxide and hydrogen sulphide.
Agricultural waste	A general term used to cover animal excreta, litter, straw, waste, carcasses and silage liquors.
Aquifer	A subsurface zone or formation of rock that contains exploitable resources of ground water.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	A landscape recognised as being of distinctive character and special scenic value.
Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI)	Identified by scientific surveying as being areas of the highest degree of conservation value.
Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO)	The option that provides the most benefit or least damage to the environment as a whole, at acceptable cost, and in the long term as well as in the short term.
Biodegradable	The ability to decompose through the action of bacteria or other microbes.
Biodegradable waste	Includes materials such as paper, food waste and green garden waste which decompose in landfill sites.
Bring facilities	Deposit facilities for the recycling of clean segregated materials such as glass and aluminium cans by members of the public.
Civic amenity (CA) site	A site provided by the local authority for local residents to dispose of bulky household waste, garden waste and recyclable materials.
Clinical waste	Any waste which consists wholly or partly of human or animal tissue, blood or other bodily fluids, excretions, drugs or other pharmaceutical products, swabs or dressings, or syringes, needles or other sharp instruments, being waste which unless rendered safe may prove hazardous to any person coming in contact with it; and Any other waste arising from medical, nursing dental, veterinary, pharmaceutical or similar practice, investigation, treatment, care, teaching or research, or the collection of blood for transfusion, being waste which may cause infection to any person coming into contact with it.
Composting	The degradation of organic wastes in the presence of oxygen to produce a fertiliser or soil conditioner.
Containment site	Landfill site where the rate of release of leachate into the environment is extremely low. Polluting components in wastes are retained within such landfills for sufficient time to allow biodegradation and attenuation processes to have occurred; thus preventing the escape of polluting species at unacceptable concentration.
Contamination	The addition, or the result of the addition, or presence of a material or materials to, or in, another substance to such a degree as to render it unfit for its intended purpose.

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Decomposition	Breakdown of matter into more simple molecules. Decomposition may be caused by physical, chemical or micro-biological action.
Disposal licence	See <i>Licensing</i> .
Ecology	The study of living organisms in relation to their surroundings.
Emission	A material which is expelled or released to the environment. Usually applied to gaseous or odorous discharges to atmosphere.
Energy recovery	Processes whereby energy may be recovered from waste. This may be achieved in three main ways; incineration (burning waste), via methane recovery from landfill, and via controlled anaerobic digestion. (see <i>Anaerobic decomposition</i>). In all three cases, the resultant energy can be used to create power, heat or combined heat and power.
Environmental impact	The total effect of any operation on the surrounding environment.
Environmental statement	Information about the likely effects of a proposed development submitted by an applicant for planning permission so that the planning authority is able to make an environmental assessment.
Essential interim landfill capacity	Identified landfill capacity required prior to the establishment of an integrated network of waste management facilities.
Fly tipping	The unregulated and hence illegal dumping of waste.
Greenhouse effect	See <i>Landfill</i> .
Incineration	A method of treating and disposing of waste by combustion which can be used to provide energy and heat.
Inert waste	Inactive or un-reactive waste. Contains no organic or biodegradable materials.
Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC)	A regulatory system to be introduced in accordance with EU Directive 96/61/EC which is designed to exercise control over releases of waste to air, water and land with the aim of achieving the best practicable environmental option.
Kerbside collection	A service which requires the householder to put out clean recyclable materials for collection from outside the property.
Landfill	The engineered practice of depositing waste into or onto land which will be restored at the end of its life to provide land for alternative use.
Landfill gas	A gas produced by the decomposition of biodegradable waste, consisting primarily of methane and carbon dioxide.
Leachate treatment	A process to reduce the polluting potential of leachate. Such processes can include leachate recirculation, spray irrigation over adjacent grassland and biological and physiochemical processes.

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Licensing	The granting of formal permission for landfill operations at a specified site. See also <i>Waste Management Licence</i> .
Liquid waste	Waste which in the condition under which it is handled will flow and can be transferred by pump and includes leachate from waste
Litter	The haphazard distribution of waste on land. At landfill sites this is usually the light, windblown, fraction in household waste such as paper and plastic which escapes before the waste is compacted and covered.
National Nature Reserve	An area of importance for flora, fauna or features of geological importance or other special interest, which are reserved and managed for conservation and to provide opportunities for study or research. Declared by EHS under Nature Conservation and Amenity lands (NI) Order 1985.
Marine Nature Reserve (MNR)	Provides for the conservation of the flora, fauna, landforms and other features of scientific interest and for study of these features.
Materials recovery facility (MRF)	Facility to sort materials for recycling.
Methane	CH ₄ , a colourless, odourless, flammable gas formed during the anaerobic decomposition of putrescible matter. It forms an explosive mixture in the range 5-15% methane in air.
Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT)	Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) plants are used to treat residual municipal waste by a combination of physical and biological processes. Waste is separated into biological and non-biological fractions through a variety of methods. Recyclable materials are separated and in some instances energy is recovered. MBT is an intermediate treatment process.
Municipal waste	Waste collected and controlled by local authorities. Generally includes household and commercial waste, street sweepings/litter and materials from civic amenity sites.
Odour	The (unpleasant) smell of a material or collection of materials. The characteristic odour of landfill gas is due mainly to alkyl benzenes and limonene, occasionally and additionally associated with esters and organo – sulphur compounds.
Precautionary principle	The avoidance or the reduction of risks to the environment by prudent action taken before any serious problem is encountered. See Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (1985). <i>Managing waste: the duty of care</i> (Eleventh Report).
Proximity principle	Highlights a need to treat and/or dispose of waste in reasonable proximity to the point at which it is generated.
Ramsar site	Stems from the Convention of Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat. A wetland is an area of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt and including areas of intertidal marine water. Aims to reduce the

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	progressive encroachment on and loss of wetlands, both now and in the future and to encourage a wise use of wetlands.
Reclamation	Process of re-manufacturing waste back into a new material.
Recovery	Options for recovering value from the waste stream. May include recycling and composting, thermal and biological treatments that use waste to produce energy.
Recyclable material	Material which is suitable for recycling.
Recycling	Processing or treating waste to make it re-useable in whole or part.
Re-use	Re-use of containers and/or packaging in the original form, either by the householder, or via the manufacturer, without reprocessing.
ROCs	The Renewables Obligation requires power suppliers to derive a specified proportion of the electricity they supply to their customers from renewables. This starts at 3% in 2003, rising gradually to 10% by 2010. The cost to consumers will be limited by a price cap and the obligation is guaranteed in law until 2027. Eligible renewable generators receive Renewables Obligation Certificates for every MWh of electricity generated. These ROCs can be sold to suppliers to fulfil their obligations.
Scrap metal	Any old metal, and any broken, worn out, deface or partly manufactured articles made wholly or partly of metal and any metallic wastes, and also includes old, broken, worn out or defaced tooltips or dies made of any materials commonly known as hard metal or of cemented or sintered metallic carbides.
Sewage sludge	The residue produced at a sewage treatment works which is not discharged with the treated effluent.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	EC Habitats Directive requires member states to designate SACs to protect some of the most seriously threatened habitats and species across Europe. Implemented through the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations (NI) 1985.
Special Protection Area (SPA)	Internationally important areas for breeding and over-wintering and migrating birds under the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC).
Special waste	Controlled wastes that fall within the Special Waste (NI) Regulations 1998. These Regulations apply to all movements of special waste including movements to and from storage, treatment and recycling facilities and movement to final disposal sites.
Transfer station	Central depot where collection vehicles deliver waste where it is compacted and loaded into bulk transfer vehicles for onward transport to a recovery or disposal facility.
Void space	The space existing between and within solids in refuse or soil.
Waste	See definitions in <i>Appendix 5A</i> .

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Waste management hierarchy	The basis of European waste management policy. The hierarchy indicates the relative priority of different methods of managing waste and provides instruction to waste management policy and planning initiatives on how to progress towards sustainable waste management.
Waste management licence (WML)	A licence granted by the Environment & Heritage Service under the Waste Contaminated Land Order (NI) 1997. The WML will replace the current Waste Disposal Licence (WDL) granted by the relevant District Council under the Pollution Control and Local Government (NI) Order 1978 when licensing powers transfer to the EHS.
Waste minimisation	Prevention or reduction of the production of waste.
Waste oil	Mineral or synthetic oil, which is contaminated, spoiled or otherwise unfit for its purpose.
Waste solvent	Solvent which is contaminated, spoiled or otherwise unfit for its original purpose.
Weighbridge	A machine used to weigh large objects such as vehicles. Used to weigh the quantity of waste received at a landfill site.