

## Regulatory position statement

### Treating solid waste from composting toilets at the depot from where they have been hired out

If you comply with the requirements below, we will allow the treatment of the solid waste from composting toilets at the depot from which they were hired from, without the need for an environmental permit.

#### Background

The Composting toilets are small-scale sewage processing systems that use biological processes to turn sewage into a compost like material which can be used to fertilise the soil. Portable composting toilets are an alternative to portable sealed chemical toilets and they are being hired out for use at festivals, shows and other public functions.

Conventional portable toilets at events are sucked out by tanker and the waste is generally taken directly from the event to a waste water treatment works for disposal. The empty toilets are then returned to a depot for cleaning ready for re-hire.

Composting toilets are different in that the waste is returned to the hire depot where it is treated and this requires either a waste exemption or an environmental permit. Currently some companies are composting the waste under [paragraph 12 exemption](#) and spreading the resulting material on land under a [paragraph 7 exemption](#).

From 1 October 2011 the paragraph 12 composting exemption ceases to exist (for non-agricultural wastes) and the composting activity will need to be carried out under an [environmental permit](#). The resulting compost can be applied to land under a paragraph 7 exemption (until October 2012) or a [standard rules permit for landspreading](#).

#### Our approach

We will not pursue an application for an environmental permit for very small-scale composting activity taking place at the depot from where composting toilets are hired from where:

- The composting toilet is designed so that it has a fully contained leak proof system which separates the urine and any sanitary wastes from the solids.
- The urine and sanitary waste is removed and taken for disposal at a suitably permitted site before the toilets are returned to the depot.

- The carbon source which is added to the solids is sawdust or wood shavings from virgin or untreated wood<sup>1</sup> only.
- The composting of the faeces and solids takes place in a secure leak proof container and it is a process that ensures that the material reaches a temperature of either 70°C or more for a period of at least one hour or 60°C for a period of at 48 hours.
- The duration of the composting period must be sufficient to ensure that the output material is a stable sanitised compost which is suitable for use as a soil conditioner or fertiliser.
- No more than 10 tonnes of material is stored and composted at any one time.
- All sanitary and other physical contaminants are stored in sealed leak proof containers and sent to an appropriately permitted site for disposal/recovery. No more than 1.5 cubic metre of waste should be stored at any one time and waste must not be stored on site for longer than 5 working days.
- You meet the relevant objectives of the Waste Framework Directive;
  - '... ensuring that waste management is carried out without endangering human health, without harming the environment and in particular:
    - (i) without risk to water, air, soil, plants or animals;
    - (ii) without causing a nuisance through noise or odours; and
    - (iii) without adversely affecting the countryside or places of special interest.'

Where the solid waste from composting toilets cannot be processed in accordance with the above criteria, an environmental permit will be required to store and process the waste.

Material processed in accordance with the above position may be spread to land either in accordance standard rules permit [SR2010 No5](#) or [SR2010 No4](#).

## Enforcement

In not pursuing an application for a permit, we will not normally take enforcement action unless the activity has caused, or is likely to cause, pollution or harm to health. For a more detailed explanation of this enforcement position, please see our [Enforcement and Sanctions](#) statement. This can be found on the '[How we regulate you](#)' page in the Business & Industry section of our web site.

This regulatory position will be reviewed by September 2013.

**MWRP RPS 114 Version:1**  
**Issued: August 2011**

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<sup>1</sup> See our [position statement on the regulation of wood](#) for an explanation of these terms.