

**Waste testing - advice for Waste Producers and Landfill Operators****Purpose of this note**

This note sets out the type of testing that we consider acceptable for waste to be disposed of to landfill. The leach tests form part of the waste acceptance criteria (WAC) which are a requirement of the Landfill Directive. The WAC are aimed at promoting a better understanding of the characteristics of waste being landfilled. This will improve our understanding of the impact the waste will have on the environment.

**Background**

Waste producers must test their waste to fully understand what it contains and how its constituents vary over time. This contributes to the waste's characterisation that will also include its physical properties. Producers should characterise their waste so that they can make the best decisions about its management. For waste to be accepted for disposal to landfill it must meet the WAC and that may involve testing. The waste may also need on-going compliance and validation testing to confirm that the characteristics of the waste have not changed.

We have released guidance on how basic waste characterisation can be performed and this is available on our website<sup>1</sup>. Associated with the implementation of the Landfill Directive a European Council Decision has been released which lists the test methods to be used (EN12457<sup>2</sup>), this includes single and two part leach tests. The legislation states that a leach test must give a liquid to solid ratio value of 10 (L/S 10).

Our guidance<sup>3</sup> currently requires the use of the two part test, '*...because it provides more information about the leaching behaviour of the waste over time.*' This test may therefore provide a waste producer with information to help him make decisions about the management of his waste.

**Position**

We recommend that waste producers use the two part test to characterise their waste in order to best understand how to manage that waste. However, we do not consider there to be an environmental benefit in requiring the two part test as an on-going compliance test by landfill operators.

Therefore;

- We will not specify which test must be used for basic characterisation or assessing compliance with WAC at landfill, but
- The two part test should be used for basic waste characterisation.

<sup>1</sup> 'Guidance for waste destined for disposal in landfills' – [http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Business/wacv2\\_1006008.pdf](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Business/wacv2_1006008.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> EN12457, parts 1 – 4, 'Leaching — Compliance test for leaching of granular waste materials and sludges'.

<sup>3</sup> 'Guidance on sampling and testing of waste to meet landfill WAC', Environment Agency, July 2005.

This position applies to waste going to all classes of landfill.

**What do I need to do as a waste producer?**

You must decide what the best option for managing your waste is. If it cannot be reduced, reused or recycled and landfill disposal is the best option you must undertake a 'basic characterisation'. This is to ensure you fully understand the properties of your waste and can decide what class of landfill your waste can go to.

We would recommend that you undertake a two part leach test on your waste to obtain as much information as possible on its leaching properties. Your laboratory or environmental consultant will be able to provide more advice on the tests.

**What do I need to do as a landfill operator?**

You may accept the results of the EN12457<sup>2</sup> single or two part leach test to confirm compliance with the WAC limits at the solid / liquid ratio value of 10 ( L/S 10) for your class of landfill.

**What will we do?**

We are publishing this position now to confirm our change of position. We will provide more advice in guidance to be published soon.

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