

Environment Protection Authority

Waste to Resources EPP

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The W2R EPP is now operational

On 1 September 2010 the *Environment Protection (Waste to Resources) Policy 2010* (W2R EPP) became operational and replaced the *Environment Protection (Waste Management) Policy 1994*.

Please note: an updated version of the W2R EPP was released on 2 September 2010 with one minor amendment. The Plastics Identification reference number for **Polystyrene (PS)** in Schedule 4 was corrected from 4 to 6. No other changes were made to the document.

Reflecting landfill bans in landfill licence conditions

Landfills in South Australia are licensed by the EPA. EPA landfill licences contain various conditions relating to the operation of the landfill and, in most cases, list those wastes that can and cannot be received and/or disposed of at the landfill.

Schedule 4 of the W2R EPP lists wastes that will be progressively banned from landfill. Some of these bans take effect immediately and others are staged over the next three years. In the coming months, the EPA will commence amending licence conditions where applicable to ensure they are consistent with the progressive landfill bans. This will also assist in avoiding confusion on what wastes a landfill can receive for disposal to landfill.

'Recycle Right' Campaign

South Australians are enthusiastic recyclers, however, benchmark research undertaken by Zero Waste SA shows that attitudes, behaviour and knowledge of recycling remained almost static between 2005 and 2008. In addition, representations to Zero Waste SA from the recycling industry have also focused on the persistent problem of 'contamination' – householders primarily with three-bin systems placing materials in the incorrect bin.

Zero Waste SA has collaborated with the Local Government Association of South Australia, KESAB *environmental solutions* and the waste and recycling industry, including Visy Recycling and Compost SA, to develop an education campaign. Ninety five thousand residents are taking part in a pilot education campaign which aims to simplify the ins and outs of household recycling.

The *Recycle Right* campaign is being piloted in five councils between September 2010 and February 2011: Adelaide City Council; Adelaide Hills Council; City of West Torrens; City of Mitcham; The Rural City of Murray Bridge. The aim is to provide a tested model which can be replicated in successive years throughout South Australia.

The centrepiece of the campaign is an information kit which includes bin lid stickers for the recycling bins and a recycling 'wheel' which helps householders identify which material goes into which bin. Supporting the campaign is a 1300 information line (1300 137 118), educational video (downloaded from the web site) and online search engine at www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au.

As part of the education campaign council customer service officers, staff and elected members are attending one-day field trips to resource recovery facilities to better understanding the ins and outs of recycling. For more information please visit www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au

Medical waste

The W2R EPP contains requirements for the collection, transport, storage, treatment and disposal of medical waste and highlights specific duties for councils, hospitals and pharmacies when dealing with medical waste. Most of these requirements have not changed from the Environment Protection (Waste Management) Policy 1994, except for one key area relating to the disposal of medical waste, and are explained below in more detail.

Medical waste produced at licensed premises

Medical waste produced at a licensed premise (ie a facility which has an EPA licence), must be placed in a prescribed container and collected for disposal by a council or a waste transporter authorised to collect and transport medical waste. If a licensee wishes to transport their own medical waste, they are required to be licensed by the EPA to transport that waste. The medical waste, produced at a licensed site, must be transported to a council, hospital or a waste depot authorised by the EPA to receive medical waste.

Storage of medical waste

Councils and hospitals that receive and store medical waste from a licensed premise, and pharmacies that receive and store medical waste from a domestic premise, must:

- store the medical waste in containers that:
 - are weatherproof, shatterproof, insect and vermin proof and leak proof (if only storing medical sharps, container does not have to be leak proof, but must be leak resistant.)
 - are cleaned and disinfected immediately after use
 - have a label clearly indicating the nature of the contents
 - are stored in a secure location.
- have equipment ready to clean up spills
- store medical sharps in containers that comply with Australian Standards
- dispose of medical waste as soon as practicable
- advise the medical waste transporter of the nature and hazards of the medical waste and any precautions to be taken during collection, transport and disposal.

This section was amended to clarify the requirements for containers that store medical waste and medical sharps. The [EPA Guideline: medical waste – storage, transport and disposal](#) will be amended to reflect the W2R EPP requirements.

Disposal of medical waste

The W2R EPP bans medical waste from being disposed of at landfills and instead outlines suitable methods of disposal.

Prior to the W2R EPP, the only way to dispose of medical waste in South Australia was through incineration. The W2R EPP recognises that alternative disposal mechanisms are being developed, which must be assessed and approved by the EPA. In approving these proposed alternatives the EPA focuses on; the waste being unidentifiable as medical waste, safe for disposal and appropriate for the waste type. This change brings South Australia in line with the other states.

While the current method for disposal of medical waste (incineration) can accept unsegregated medical waste, proposed alternative methods will need to be appropriate for the waste type and require the waste to be segregated at the source e.g. the hospital.

Contact us

For more information or to be added or to be removed from the mailing list, contact Anne Ellson at anne.ellson@epa.sa.gov.au