

## **Wood Protection Association publishes guidance on waste disposal**

Waste is the new big issue. On 15 July all but five landfill sites closed to disposal of 'hazardous' waste. At the same time it became illegal to dispose of hazardous and non-hazardous wastes at the same site – the so-called co-disposal ban. This affects a wide range of objects and materials requiring disposal at the end of their useful life. Stories abound about mountains of computer screens, paint tins, batteries, old cars and lakes of used engine oil some of which were being usefully recycled or reused but which are now subject to draconian rules that undermine recycling and reuse. Greater costs and complex regulations increase the incentive for illegal fly tipping.

The first key decision in the route to legal waste disposal is classification of waste. Is it non-hazardous or is it in one of the current two categories of 'Special' or 'Hazardous' waste? Arriving at a conclusion on this can be very complicated but a task group of The Wood Protection Association has developed guidance on the new waste disposal regime in the UK and the classification of wastes from the wood preservation process itself and waste treated timber. The latter might arise as part of a manufacturing process such as construction or fencing or as a consequence of demolition or removal of a structure at the end of its service life – poles and fencing timbers are examples.

The environmental credentials of timber as a sustainable construction material are important and disposal of waste is one of the whole-life issues to be taken into account when comparing one material with another. Although recent changes in regulation of CCA and creosote mean that timber treated with those preservatives is classified as hazardous for disposal, the model assessments indicate that other treated timber used in construction including joinery, and timber treated with the newer copper-organic replacements for CCA, is non-hazardous.

The new WPA *Guide to the Disposal of Wood Preservative and Preservative-treated Wood Wastes* has been developed taking into account comments by the

Environment Agency and the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) and is the only industry-specific guide of its type. It will be followed by further guidance on practical aspects of compliance with the new landfill (particularly the new waste acceptance criteria) and waste incineration regulations.

Typically wastes from the timber industry are disposed of either by landfill or incinerated, in the latter case sometimes usefully to generate energy in the form of heat, steam or electricity. It has been the case that many timber components at the end of their designed service life have been advantageously reused or recycled directly. This is under threat from excessively bureaucratic application of waste regulations and The Wood Protection Association is in negotiation with government to try to ensure that reuse and recycle remain viable options for treated timber at the end of its first or subsequent service lives.

The Guide provides a summary of the regulations as they are currently framed and provides model assessments of the classification of wastes from the preservation and timber-using industries. The Guide is available free of charge to Wood Protection Association members. Non-members interested in obtaining a copy should contact the association on 01332 225100 or by email at [wpa@bwpda.co.uk](mailto:wpa@bwpda.co.uk) .

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**Note for editors:**

Further information is available from Dr C R Coggins on 01332 225100 or by email to [crc@bwpda.co.uk](mailto:crc@bwpda.co.uk) .