

A guide to Simpler recycling:
Understanding the new workplace
recycling rules in England.



A Free eBook from
Dukeries Cleaning Supplies

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Your Practical Guide to Workplace Waste Separation

Introduction

This guide outlines the legal requirements for all workplaces in England to separate their waste before collection. Understanding and implementing these rules is crucial for environmental responsibility and legal compliance. We'll walk you through the essentials and provide practical tips for success.

Chapter 1:

Understanding the New Waste Separation Rules

- From March 31st 2025, all workplaces with over 10 employees* in England are legally required to separate key waste streams. This applies to waste generated by employees, customers, and visitors.

* Micro-firms (with fewer than 10 full-time equivalent employees) have until 31 March 2027.

The Three Essential Waste Streams:

You **must** separate the following:

- **Dry Recyclable Materials:** This includes plastic, metal, glass, paper, and card.
- **Food Waste:** All food waste must be separated, regardless of quantity or whether your workplace serves food.
- **Non-Recyclable Waste (Residual Waste):** This is waste that cannot be recycled.

How to Separate:

You have two main options:

1. **Separate Bins:** Provide clearly labelled bins for each of the three waste streams. This is often the most straightforward method.
2. **Pre-Collection Separation:** If using mixed bins initially, you must ensure the waste is separated into the three categories before your waste collector picks it up. Colour coded sacks will make this task much easier.

Customer and Visitor Waste:

If you provide bins for customers or visitors, you are also responsible for ensuring this waste is separated before collection.

Container Size and Collection Frequency:

Discuss with your waste collection provider the appropriate size for your waste containers and the frequency of collections based on the volume of waste your workplace produces.

Garden Waste:

If your business generates garden waste, you must arrange for it to be recycled or composted, provided this offers the best environmental outcome.

Tip: Conduct a waste audit to understand the types and volumes of waste your workplace generates. This will help you determine the most suitable bin sizes and collection schedules.

Chapter 2: Who Needs to Comply?

These regulations apply broadly to a wide range of workplaces, including but not limited to:

- Offices
- Retail and wholesale (supermarkets, pharmacies, etc.)
- Transport (train stations, airports, etc.)
- Hospitality (restaurants, hotels, etc.)
- Holiday parks and short-term rentals
- Entertainment and sports venues
- Agricultural premises
- Construction sites
- Warehouses
- Manufacturing facilities
- Venues for temporary events
- Places of education (schools, universities)
- Healthcare places (GP surgeries, hospitals)
- Care homes
- Charities
- Places of worship
- Penal institutes
- Charity shops (selling donated goods)
- Residential hostels (for those with no permanent address)
- Premises used mainly for public meetings

Important Note: This list is not exhaustive. If your workplace generates waste similar to household waste, these rules likely apply to you.

Tip: If you are unsure whether your workplace is in scope, consult the specific guidance for your sector on the WRAP ([Waste & Resources Action Programme](#)) website.

Chapter 3: Separating Different Types of Waste

Let's delve deeper into the specifics of each waste stream:

3.1 Dry Recyclable Waste:

This category includes:

- **Glass:** Drinks bottles, rinsed empty food jars.
- **Metal:** Drinks cans, rinsed empty food tins, empty aerosols, aluminium foil, aluminium food trays and tubes.
- **Plastic:** Rinsed empty food containers and bottles.
- **Paper and Card:** Newspapers, envelopes, boxes, and cardboard food packaging.

Important:

- You should discuss with your waste collector whether paper and card need to be separated from other dry recyclables.
- Waste collectors may also collect other dry recyclable materials like glass separately.

Items NOT typically collected in dry recycling:

- **Glass:** Candles, drinking glasses, flat glass, cookware (Pyrex), light bulbs and tubes, microwave plates, mirrors, vases, window glass, ceramics.
- **Metal:** Laminated foil (pet food pouches), electrical items and batteries, general kitchenware (cutlery, pots, pans), kettles, irons, pipes, packaging that contained hazardous substances (white spirits, paints, etc.).
- **Plastic:** Compostable or biodegradable plastic, packaging that contained hazardous substances, bulky rigid plastics (garden furniture), polystyrene packaging, PVC packaging.
- **Paper and Card:** Tissues, toilet paper, absorbent hygiene products (nappies), cotton wool, wet wipes.

Tip: Provide clear visual guides near your recycling bins indicating what can and cannot be recycled. Consider using our range of colour-coded refuse sacks to make identification easier:



Our clear refuse sacks are manufactured from carefully selected post industrial waste and blended to produce a strong film with good clarity offering an ideal bag for sites with security initiatives or recycling and waste segregation.

This economical bag is useful for medium duty waste up to 10 kilo making it ideal for office and general waste.

3.2 Food Waste:

You **must** collect food waste, even if your workplace doesn't have a kitchen or serve food. This includes:

- Leftovers from staff lunches
- Fruit and vegetable scraps
- Coffee grounds and tea bags
- Food preparation waste (e.g., onion skins)

Important:

- Packaging labelled 'compostable' or 'biodegradable' **cannot** be recycled with food waste.
- Caddy liners (including compostable ones) used to hold food waste **can** be collected.

Tip: Provide dedicated, ideally smaller, food waste bins in areas where food is consumed or prepared. Consider using our [Space for product image/description of green sack for food waste] for easy identification.

3.3 Non-Recyclable Waste:

This is the waste that remains after separating dry recyclables and food waste. Ensure this is placed in a separate bin or sack.



We stock a wide range of Black refuse sacks to suit every requirement. From our economical light duty sack (15 Microns) to our Extra Heavy Duty 42 Micron sack, we have the right bin bags for you.

[Contact our team](#) for help in choosing the right bag for your sites.

Chapter 4: Working with Waste Collectors

You are responsible for arranging separate collections for dry recyclable waste, food waste, and non-recyclable waste.

Choosing a Waste Collector:

- You can use a private waste management company or check if your local authority provides these services.
- If your current collector doesn't offer the full range of services, you will need to engage additional providers.

Crucially, you must ensure that any waste carrier you use is registered on the Public Register of Waste Carriers, Brokers and Dealers.

Discussing Your Needs:

- Discuss your specific waste streams and separation methods with your chosen waste collector.
- Confirm how your dry recyclable waste should be presented (e.g., co-mingled or separated paper/card).

Tip: Obtain written confirmation from your waste collector outlining the types of waste they collect separately and any specific requirements they have.

Chapter 5: Micro-Firm Exemption (Temporary)

Businesses with fewer than 10 full-time equivalent employees (micro-firms) have a temporary exemption until **31 March 2027** to comply with these new rules.

Important:

- This exemption is based on the total number of employees across the entire business, not per location.
- Part-time employees are counted as a fraction based on their pro-rated hours. Volunteers do not count.
- Micro-firms do not need to register or apply for this temporary exemption.

However, even with this exemption, we would encourage micro-firms to start implementing waste separation practices as soon as they can for environmental and future compliance.

Chapter 6: Legal Obligations and Enforcement

Workplaces have a legal duty to:

- Ensure waste disposal is safe, secure, and legal.
- Take all reasonable steps to minimise waste production.

Responsibilities of Waste Collectors:

Waste collectors also have legal obligations to:

- Collect dry recyclable materials and food waste separately from non-recyclable waste.
- Collect paper and card separately from plastic, metal, and glass (unless co-collection is justified by a written assessment).
- Ensure separately collected waste is not mixed after collection and is sent for recycling, not landfill or incineration.

Consequences of Non-Compliance:

- Failure to comply with these regulations by **31 March 2025** (or **31 March 2027** for micro-firms) can result in a **compliance notice** from the Environment Agency (EA).
- Compliance notices can be issued to the waste producer (e.g., the business), landlords, or facilities management companies.

It is an offence to fail to comply with a compliance notice, and enforcement action may be taken.

Reporting Non-Compliance:

From April 2025, the public will be able to report workplaces that are not following these rules to the Environment Agency. Information on how to report will be updated on the government website.

Tip: Proactive implementation of these waste separation rules will not only ensure legal compliance but also demonstrate your commitment to environmental sustainability.



Chapter 7: Resources and Further Information

- **WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme):** The WRAP website (funded by Defra) provides specific guidance for various sectors and a useful waste calculator to estimate costs and improve efficiency.
- **Public Register of Waste Carriers, Brokers and Dealers:** This online register allows you to check if a waste carrier is legally registered.
- **Environment Agency (EA):** The EA website provides information on environmental regulations and enforcement.

Conclusion

Implementing effective waste separation practices is a crucial step for all workplaces in England. By understanding the regulations, providing the right infrastructure (including using our colour-coded refuse sacks), and working collaboratively with your waste collectors, you can ensure compliance, minimise your environmental impact, and contribute to a more sustainable future.

Explore our range of colour-coded refuse sacks to simplify your waste separation process:

[Blue Refuse Sacks](#)

[Red Refuse Sacks](#)

[Green Refuse Sacks](#)

[Yellow \(Tiger Stripe\) Refuse Sacks](#)

[Clear Refuse Sacks](#)

[Black Refuse Sacks](#)

We hope this guide has been helpful and we're always happy to help with advice and free samples where available.

For further assistance or to explore our range of waste management product please visit
www.dukeriescleaningsupplies.co.uk

