

Healthcare Waste Pre-acceptance / Acceptance Campaign 2018-20

Why audit healthcare waste?

Following recent compliance activity and discussions with waste operators, we believe that healthcare wastes are not always properly segregated. However, due to the potentially infectious or offensive nature of these wastes, operators are not always able to check waste contents and so rely on robust procedures being in place at the point of production.

We will be carrying out a healthcare waste audit campaign over a 2-year period from April 2018. The evidence for having the campaign has been identified through a number of sources including:

- Compliance officers finding out of date pre-acceptance audits at waste facilities.
- The healthcare waste industry identifying issues with producers poorly segregating clinical and offensive healthcare waste.

The aims of the campaign are to ensure that healthcare waste is:

- appropriately segregated at source;
- properly described, classified and consigned; and,
- sent for appropriate treatment, disposal or recovery.

The campaign will check that waste management sites are provided with quality waste pre-acceptance information from producers and that this information is adequately assessed by the waste facility to determine appropriate storage and treatment of the waste and that it is checked on arrival at the facility to confirm it meets the pre-acceptance information. This ensures the 'right waste, right place' requirements.

Campaign Overview

The first phase of the campaign for 2018/19 will focus on pre-acceptance of waste at alternative treatment plants and some transfer stations. In particular, waste received at those sites from large producers of healthcare waste (>50 tonnes per year). As part of this campaign we will be contacting waste management operators and healthcare waste producers to request copies of pre-acceptance procedures, pre-acceptance audits and consignment notes. We will also be auditing some treatment plants and transfer stations. Findings from this phase will be used to risk assess and target audits at producers where the information is lacking.

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The second phase of the campaign for 2019/20 will cover the pre-acceptance of waste from smaller waste producers (doctors, dentists, vets etc.), smaller transfer stations and third-party carriers. The third-party waste carriers and transfer stations have been included in this second phase, as treatment plant operators have highlighted problems with obtaining adequate information from them.

Phase 1: 2018/19 so far

We have identified the large producers of healthcare waste and will be writing to both producers and operators to request information shortly. Following this we will be auditing both producers and treatment plants / transfer stations.

June 2018