

Waste

Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA Victoria) is the state's independent environmental regulator. Under the powers of the *Environment Protection Act 1970*, EPA is responsible for protecting the environment and the community through effective regulation of industry and pollution. EPA's vision is a healthy environment that supports a liveable and prosperous Victoria. As part of its *5 Year Plan* EPA is committed to ensuring Victoria's waste is managed to meet prescribed standards and does not impact on the quality of our environment.

FACT SHEET

PUBLICATION 1469.1*
MAY 2016

Authorised and published by EPA Victoria
200 Victoria Street, Carlton VIC 3053

*This replaces publication 1469 issued July 2012

What is waste?

Waste is any material or substance that is of no further use and has been discarded. If not properly managed waste can cause pollution and adverse impacts on the environment. Under the *Environment Protection (Industrial Waste Resource) Regulations 2009* waste is defined as any matter, whether solid, liquid, gaseous or radioactive, which is discharged, emitted or deposited in the environment in such volume, constituency or manner as to cause an alteration of the environment.

EPA's role in regulating waste

EPA is currently responsible for the development and implementation of Victoria's statutory framework for waste. The framework provides for solid wastes, such as municipal (household), commercial, industrial and prescribed wastes.

EPA has a key role in protecting the community from waste pollution through:

- the issuing of licences to businesses who receive or treat waste and ensuring they are complied with
- issuing works approvals for industrial and waste management activities that have the potential for significant environmental impact.

Landfills

EPA sets environmental objectives, standards and best-practice measures for landfill operators to minimise waste and its impact on the community.

In most cases an EPA works approval is needed before a landfill can be constructed and a licence is required to operate. The licence sets out the expected performance, how the landfill will operate and the monitoring to check environmental performance.

The types of wastes that might be disposed of at EPA licensed landfills include:

- building and demolition material, including bricks, concrete, timber, glass, metals, bitumen, plastic and plaster board
- trees, shrubs and garden waste
- shredded tyres
- domestic garbage
- fruit, vegetables, supermarket and butcher's waste
- prescribed wastes such as contaminated soil
- asbestos.

Victoria has a levy system in place to encourage the diversion of wastes from landfill and fund waste initiatives.

REPORTING WASTE POLLUTION

To report industrial waste pollution, call EPA's 24-hour Pollution Hotline on **1300 372 842 (1300 EPA VIC)**.

Visit epa.vic.gov.au for more information about waste pollution.

For the past 20 years, license holders have had to pay a landfill levy for each tonne of waste. How much they pay depends on the type of waste.

Landfill levies are used solely for the purposes of environmental protection and fostering environmentally sustainable use of resources and best practice in waste management. Levies also provide an incentive to minimise the generation of waste.

Types of waste

Municipal waste

Associated with the day-to-day activities of households, includes garbage and domestic household waste, residential kerbside collections, residential hard waste collections, residential garden waste, municipal street sweepings and park waste. Your local council is responsible for municipal waste issues.

Commercial and industrial waste

Associated with commercial, industrial or trade activities which pose a low risk to the environment, such as construction and demolition wastes, waste from cafes or restaurants, road construction and maintenance waste and waste from primary industries. Re-use and recycling options should be investigated for this type of waste, as in many cases industrial waste, such as building materials, can be reused or recycled.

Prescribed industrial waste

Comes from commercial or industrial sources that are potentially hazardous to humans or the environment. The only waste type produced domestically is waste from a grease trap. These wastes are regulated under the *Environment Protection (Industrial Waste Resource) Regulations 2009*.

The Regulations provide a decision framework within which industry must assess and implement practicable opportunities to avoid, reduce, reuse or recycle their wastes and avoid disposal to landfill.

EPA partners with other government bodies such as the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), Sustainability Victoria, regional and metropolitan waste management groups and local government on waste policy development, regulation and program delivery.

