

A brief history of Hazardous Waste in Victoria

1970s

Low understanding of the effects of hazardous waste

Poor understanding of the environmental impacts of disposing of hazardous waste to landfill.

Minimal management requirements placed on the operators of hazardous waste facilities.

» 1970 – *Environment Protection Act 1970* came into force.

» 1972 – Initial EPA licensing and regulation of industry.

1980s

Developing standards to manage hazardous waste

Better management of hazardous waste facilities with the introduction of some restrictions on the type of waste sent to landfill.

Little action taken to reduce the generation of hazardous waste.

» 1987 – Liquid waste banned from landfill.

» 1987 – Release of the first Environment Protection (Prescribed Waste) Regulations, establishing systems for the ‘cradle-to-grave’ tracking and management of hazardous wastes.

1990s

Improving landfill standards and reducing the amount of waste being sent to landfill

Industry begins to develop waste reduction strategies and implement cleaner production initiatives.

Strengthened environmental controls and landfill designs.

» 1990 – Implemented the Industrial Waste Management Policy (Waste Minimisation) that introduced the waste management hierarchy as a decision-making framework.

» 1998 – Improved regulation of hazardous waste management through the revised *Environment Protection (Prescribed Waste) Regulations 1998*.

» 1999 – First use of landfill levies as an incentive to avoid the landfill disposal of prescribed industrial waste.

2000-2008

Working to ensure safety for the environment and community and planning to reduce hazardous waste generation

Strengthened the application of the waste management hierarchy

The focus has remained on the safe management and minimisation of harm posed by hazardous waste.

» 2000 – Release of the *Industrial Waste Management Policy (Prescribed Industrial Waste) 2000*, to guide the management of hazardous waste through the decade.

» 2007 – Landfill levies significantly increased, establishing landfill as costly last resort.

» 2007 – Introduction of classification system for hazardous waste.

» 2007 – Require the diversion of materials from landfill where ready recovery options are available, e.g., 205 L steel drums and used oil filters.

» 2008 – A further significant increase in landfill levies, with revenue reinvested to assist industry in developing waste reduction, reuse, recycling and treatment systems and technologies.

FUTURE

Implementing programs to avoid generating waste and building recognition that waste can be a valuable resource

Zero high-hazard waste to landfill by 2020.

Development of new hazardous waste regulations that will be:

- » simple
- » measurable
- » transparent.

The application of the waste hierarchy to focus on avoiding waste generation, maximising material recovery and improving resource efficiency.

Generate business opportunities through the innovative reuse and management of materials.

Understanding hazardous waste

Hazardous wastes or prescribed wastes can be by-products from producing everyday goods and services, like the manufacture of motor vehicles and plastics, or the dry cleaning of clothes.



Classification	Example	Options	Outcome
Category A waste (Highest hazard)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly contaminated tank sludge from an oil refinery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banned from landfill and requires treatment to reduce its hazard before landfill disposal is considered 	Waste is treated at an EPA-licensed treatment facility to stabilise contaminants and reduce its hazard to at least Category B levels before landfill disposal is considered
Category B waste (High hazard)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residual waste from a waste treatment facility Paint residues from car manufacturing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disposal to Category B licensed landfill Treatment to further reduce hazard and allow disposal to Category C licensed landfill 	Further treatment to Category C is preferred but not always possible with existing technology
Category C waste (low hazard)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-hazard contaminated soil from a service station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disposed to a licensed Category C landfill 	Where possible, treatment and elimination of the hazard should be attempted before disposal to landfill

* For more information on how the waste management hierarchy is applied by EPA, along with the other environment protection principles, refer to EPA publication 1360, *Applying the environment protection principles in waste management regulation*.