

Diversion of Bio Waste from Landfill

The EU Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC) requires increased diversion of bio waste from landfill. To achieve this, radical change is required in how household and other wastes are collected and managed. It is now mandatory to reduce biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill to 75% of the total amount (by weight) produced in 1995. New systems to collect separated organic municipal waste and to treat it so as to divert it from landfill by end of this year must be set up.

The Landfill Directive is fully supported by Government and the National Strategy includes these targets.

Currently there are about 29 Landfills operating in the country, which are licensed by the EPA. It is expected that this number will fall to just over twenty within a year or so. All of these licences will continue to reflect the EU's Landfill Directive particularly with regard to this fraction of Municipal Waste. Consequently it is reasonable to assume that the EPA will modify Licenses for landfills in advance of the due dates.

The Government Strategy is also to meet in full the Landfill Directive's requirements. It is most likely that regulations similar to the Packaging Regulations will be introduced obliging producers (i.e. households and businesses) to source segregate this waste for separate presentation and to arrange for its segregated collection. It is likely, that similar to the Packaging Regulations, there will be an obligation to prevent this material from been mixed with residual waste and obligations to compost it or treat it in an anaerobic digestion plant. Modifications to the landfill levy are expected to reflect the unacceptable nature of this material, when untreated, for landfilling.

The Connacht Waste Plan also requires this material to be diverted from Landfill and so the targets deemed necessary to meet the requirements of the Connacht Regional Waste Management Plan are as set out in the table below:

Date	% of premises to have segregated organic waste collection
1 st September 2009	20% of Households 50% of all commercial, Industrial and Municipal Waste
1 st January 2010	100% of all commercial, Industrial and Municipal Waste
31 st Dec 2010	40% of Households

Mayo County Council will be issuing Revised Waste Collection Permits to reflect these requirements.

In summary, how the material will be presented for collection will be regulated. So to will be how it is collected and treated. Finally it will not be possible to deposit this material in a landfill in the near future because of EPA licensing restrictions. Clearly failure to meet these targets is not an option. All those involved in collecting biodegradable waste should immediately prepare Plans and Programmes to enable them to continue to collect this waste in compliance with the Landfill Directive, Waste Collection Permits and pending Regulations.

M. J. Joyce
Regional Waste Coordinator

11th Feb. '09