

Guidance for businesses that require customer participation to segregate materials for recycling

Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to inform businesses that rely on their customers to put waste material in collection containers within their premises on how to comply with the duty to segregate dry recyclable material for recycling.

Segregation of food waste by customers is not addressed in this guidance. Bespoke guidance for the quick service restaurant sector is available on our website:

www.sepa.org.uk/environment/waste/zero-waste/

Other enquiries regarding segregation of food waste by customers should be sent to: zerowaste@sepa.org.uk



Legal context

One of the amendments to the duty of care requirements in Section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, introduced under the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012, requires businesses to take all reasonable steps to ensure the separate collection of dry recyclable waste:

- glass (including drinks bottles and rinsed food jars);
- metal (including rinsed cans and tins);
- plastic (including drinks bottles and rinsed food containers);
- paper;
- cardboard.

All reasonable steps

What is reasonable depends on individual circumstances; however, where a business (or external event) provides containers for the collection of dry recyclable waste by their customers, we expect appropriate recycling facilities to be made available. As a minimum we expect:

- Facilities to be available for customers to recycle glass, metal, plastic, paper and cardboard, where they are generated.
- Recycling facilities to be adequately signposted with information provided to customers to enable them to use the system and avoid contamination of recyclables.
- Recycling facilities to be co-located with general waste collection facilities.
- Periodic monitoring of recycling performance and contamination to be undertaken and improvements made where necessary.
- A well operated recycling system should ensure a high capture rate of recyclables. If a significant proportion of recyclables remain in the residual collection or if the recycling is heavily contaminated, we expect the business to work with their customers and waste contractors to make improvements.
- Businesses should engage effectively with their customers, for example:
 - Where businesses provide overnight accommodation (hotels, caravan parks, campsites etc), customers checking in or picking up keys should be informed of recycling requirements and the importance of using the systems provided correctly.
 - Where a business has site or house rules for customers, the requirement to segregate materials for recycling should be included in those rules.

It is recommended that only clear bags are used for the collection of recyclable materials in order to facilitate a visual quality check. Black and opaque bin bags should be avoided for this purpose.

The Resource Efficient Scotland guide to planning & delivering environmentally sustainable events provides practical advice on communicating with customers and is available at:

www.resourceefficientscotland.com/resource/how-plan-and-deliver-environmentally-sustainable-events