

Information sheet

Waste Management

Waste management laws

The Queensland Government introduced the Environmental Protection (Waste Management) Policy 2000 (the Policy) and the Environmental Protection (Waste Management) Regulation 2000 (the Regulation) to co-ordinate and clarify waste management practices and provide environmental safeguards for waste. This information sheet provides an overview of the Policy and the Regulation.

Who is responsible for the laws?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for administering the Policy and the Regulation.

The EPA works closely with Queensland's local governments, as they are also responsible for carrying out day-to-day waste management activities.

What are the benefits of the laws?

The legislation benefits Queensland communities and the environment through:

- minimising the impact of waste on the environment and human health;
- requiring safer disposal practices; and
- identifying cost savings from improved planning and management of waste services.

What is the difference between the Policy and the Regulation?

The Policy provides a strategic framework for managing waste in Queensland. The Regulation contains the requirements for handling specific waste streams.

What's in the Policy and the Regulation?

1. The Policy

The Policy outlines the preferred waste management hierarchy and principles for achieving good waste management.

The waste hierarchy moves from the most preferred to the least preferred:

- waste avoidance;
- waste re-use;
- waste recycling;
- energy recovery;
- waste disposal.

The principles for achieving good waste management are:

- the polluter-pays principle — all costs associated with waste management should, where possible, be borne by the waste generator;
- the user-pays principle — all costs associated with the use of a resource should, where possible, be included in the price of goods and services developed from that resource;
- the product stewardship principle — the producer or importer of a product should take all reasonable steps to minimise environmental harm from the production, use and disposal of the product.

The hierarchy and principles provide the basis for the development of waste management programs by industry, voluntary industry waste reduction programs, and waste management strategic plans by State and local government.

The Policy also:

- sets criteria for administering authorities (usually the EPA or local government) to follow when making management decisions concerning waste;
- specifies the content of waste management programs which may be required as part of a development approval or environmental authority;
- outlines requirements for voluntary industry waste reduction programs; and
- requires State government departments and local governments to undertake strategic waste management planning.

2. The Regulation

The Regulation includes:

- offences for littering, waste dumping, unlawful disposal of hypodermic needles and unlawful activities at waste facilities;
- provision for a waste tracking system that tracks the movement of specific wastes to ensure correct disposal;
- requirements for clinical and related waste management planning including segregation, storage and disposal;
- requirements for managing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs); and
- design rules for waste equipment.

Supporting information

The EPA has a variety of general and technical information available in both printed and electronic formats (via the website) which help explain the provisions of the legislation. Topics include:

- clinical or related waste management;
- waste tracking;
- PCB management;
- litter management;
- developing waste management strategic plans for State and local governments; and
- developing waste management programs.

Other information sheets in this series include:

- clinical or related waste management;
- clinical or related waste storage;
- clinical or related waste treatment and disposal;
- defining clinical waste;
- determining whether waste is “clinical waste”;
- managing sanitary hygiene waste; and
- pharmaceutical and cytotoxic waste management.

Where can I find more information?

Information on waste regulations and supporting information can be obtained from a variety of sources.

If you wish to purchase a copy of the legislation, contact GOPRINT.

For general information on waste management or to obtain copies of supporting information, you can visit the EPA website at www.epa.qld.gov.au.

Advice and support are available through a statewide network of regional and district EPA offices.

Contact details are available on the above website and in the White Pages.

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