

Crackdown on illegal waste at recycling centres

Waste from Essex businesses which has been illegally left at recycling centres has left taxpayers with a disposal bill running to hundreds of thousands of pounds.

'Man with a van' operators offering cheap rubbish clearance, property developers and independent building and home improvement trades have swamped many sites. Local facilities have seen the amount of DIY and construction waste alone leap by over 50% in the last two years.

To tackle the problem, Essex County Council is set to announce changes to the way sites will operate in the future, to prevent taxpayers footing the bill for business waste, reduce queues for genuine customers and prevent daytime closures.

The rule of thumb of how the law works, is that household waste covers items which a householder would normally take with them when they move house. If the waste is something you would leave behind, like doors, a fitted kitchen or bathroom, or soil and hardcore from a garden, it is construction waste. And business waste of any kind is strictly excluded.

The current plan to improve recycling centres means that from the 31st October, about half of the county's sites will also no longer allow vans or multi-axle trailers in and will no longer offer any disposal facilities for DIY and construction waste.

The remaining sites will still offer access to residents who only have access to a commercial vehicle, but will place strict limits on how much DIY waste can be disposed of. Vans and pick-ups will be under greater scrutiny though, and those identified as bringing in waste from any kind of business activity will be refused entry and owners may be liable to prosecution.

Councillor Simon Walsh Cabinet Member for Waste and Environment said: "The taxpayer cannot continue to pick up the bill for businesses which don't dispose of their waste properly. These operational changes will stop people unlawfully disposing of business and trade waste at recycling centres at the expense of the taxpayer, whilst still providing the facility for residents to dispose of their legitimate DIY waste when carrying out ad-hoc work at home themselves."

Residents who are unsure about whether to take waste to a recycling centre or whether they will need to rent a skip for larger home improvement projects after 31 October should check the Recycle for Essex website before heading to their local site.

-Ends-

Notes to editors

For more information, please contact Carla Johnson – Carla.johnson@essex.gov.uk, tel: 03330 131891.

1. Twelve of the 21 sites across Essex will no longer accept DIY and construction waste. This includes:
 - Soil and hardcore;
 - Ceramics, including tiles, toilets, basins etc;
 - Gypsum-based products, including plasterboard and dry wall lining;
 - uPVC and wooden window frames;
 - uPVC and wooden internal and external doors; and
 - Fitted kitchens.

These sites will also prohibit access to all commercial type vehicles, including small vans and pick-up trucks and any towed trailers with more than one axle.

The sites in this category are:

1. Burnham-on-Crouch
2. Canvey Island
3. Chigwell
4. Dovercourt
5. Kirby-le-Soken
6. Lawford
7. Mountnessing

8. Rayleigh (At Rayleigh, commercial-type vehicles will be prohibited but limited DIY and construction waste will be accepted as per point 2 below)
9. South Woodham Ferrers
10. Waltham Abbey
11. West Mersea
12. Witham

2. The remaining nine recycling centres will still take these DIY and construction waste materials, subject to the following per household limits:

In any 28-day period

- three wheelbarrow loads (one car boot full) of soil and hardcore; and
 - one wheelbarrow load of tiles
- and, in any six-month period.

- three large ceramic items, e.g. toilet or wash basin;
- one uPVC or wooden window frame;
- one uPVC or wooden external door;
- three wooden internal doors; and
- any elements of a built-in kitchen

The sites in this category are:

1. Braintree
2. Brentwood
3. Chelmsford
4. Clacton
5. Colchester
6. Harlow
7. Maldon
8. Pitsea
9. Saffron Walden

3. DIY and construction waste is any material that has arisen as a result of construction and demolition to a home or garden. There is no duty on local

authorities to accept or dispose of DIY and construction waste from residential properties. Although the RCHWs are required to accept all household waste, this is a defined term under the [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#) and the [Controlled Waste Regulations 2012](#) and does not include all waste types generated by a household.