

# REDUCING FIRE RISK AT WASTE MANAGEMENT SITES

This guidance has been prepared by the Waste Industry Safety and Health (WISH) Forum. It has had input from, and is supported by, ESA (Environmental Services Association), the Environment Agency (EA), The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Health and Safety Laboratories (HSL), the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA), CIWM (Chartered Institution of Wastes Management) and other bodies. Specific messages from the HSE and EA are included at the end of this introduction. In addition, the main insurers providing cover to the waste management sector have been consulted for their views.

The aim of this guidance is to provide waste management operators with the guidance, information and standards to allow them to:

- Reduce the likelihood and frequency of fires occurring on solid waste handling sites
- Where fires do occur, to reduce the potential health and environmental impacts

This guidance is intended as an umbrella document: It gives advice applicable to a wide range of waste management and similar sites which handle wastes, but it cannot cover every specific aspect of all forms of waste management operation. As knowledge on the burn properties of specific wastes improves, experience of real fires accumulates and as better information becomes available, revisions of this guidance will be made to keep it up to date.



CIWM



environmental  
services  
association



CFOA  
Chief Fire Officers  
Association

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It is also accepted that future guidance from sector specific bodies or regulators on specific waste technologies and/or specific wastes may impose higher standards. WISH would welcome the development of such specific guidance, in particular where it provides guidance for specific waste types and/or technologies. Where such sector guidance is produced and where appropriate, future revisions of this guidance will include signposts to allow access to such specific documents. If you are in any doubt about the standards which apply in a specific set of circumstances you should seek the advice of your regulator. You must always comply with regulatory standards and guidance.

It is not the intent of this guidance to be inflexible, and options and considerations have been given throughout to allow operators to tailor it to their circumstances. Nor is it the intent to provide a one-stop-shop for waste management and similar sites on fire risk – existing guidance and standards on general fire management and control should be read in conjunction with this guidance. However, it is the intent of this guidance to provide a framework through which operators can reduce the risk of fire on their sites.

*HSE message: "This guidance has been developed by WISH to help control the safety and health risks associated with fires. It provides guidance for waste management sites and other sites where wastes are handled and/or stored. The Health and Safety Executive was consulted in the production of this publication. It endorses the sensible, proportionate, reasonable and balanced advice to owners on managing the risk from fires at these facilities as set out in the guidance. Some parts of the guidance represent good practice and may go further than the minimum you need to do to comply with the law"*

*EA message: "The Environment Agency recognises that the WISH guidance provides a range of tools, techniques and advice to minimise the impact of fires on the environment and local community. However, it does not replace regulatory guidance and following it does not remove the need to comply with any statutory requirements."*



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For ease of reading this guidance is split: The first part covers general issues such as scope and fire risks. The second covers specific guidance for sites in four areas: whole site issues, issues in reception, during treatment and for storage of wastes. Appendices are included on issues such as stack sizes and checklists to help you assess if your fire control is adequate.

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**Tips** – throughout this publication you will find „tips“ in text boxes. These are from the experience of various waste management operators. They should not be considered part of formal guidance and are there simply to provide informal advice. They are intended to inform and share knowledge and you should consider these tips in the light of your own site specific requirements and your own individual situation.

## 1. Introduction

Fire is an ever-present possibility at most waste management sites, if only because many wastes are readily combustible. Operators should therefore ensure they have adequate controls in place to prevent fires and, should a fire occur, that the risks to human health and the environment are minimised.

This guidance aims to give an overview of fire management on solid waste sites (see scope in section 1.2). It is not the intent to provide a comprehensive guide on all aspects of fire safety, to duplicate general fire management guidance which is available elsewhere or provide in-depth technical advice. It is your responsibility to ensure that your management of fire safety is adequate. For guidance on sources of competent advice see the glossary section of this guidance under „competent advice“.

### 1.1 Risks of fires

1.1.1 Fires involving wastes can cause significant harm to people and the environment:

- There is the risk of death and/or serious injury and health damage from high thermal energy and smoke inhalation
- Combustion products, even those from non-toxic materials, release airborne pollutants which can cause short and long term effects on human health and the environment
- Firewater run-off can transport pollutants into drainage systems, rivers and lakes, groundwater and soil, threatening water supplies, public health, wildlife and recreational use
- Explosions, sparks and projectiles can harm people and spread any fire
- Substantial property damage and subsequent financial losses

1.1.2 There are also some less direct sources of harm, such as:

- The significant burden for the Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) and other public agencies when responding to a fire may be both immediate and/or long lasting
- Civil claims from third parties relating to nuisance or potential health effects and fines and/or costs levied by environmental, fire and health and safety regulators
- You are likely to be responsible for the costs of clean-up, both on and off-site under the principle of the polluter pays. This can be expensive, as in many cases the solid remains of combustion products and partially burnt material can be classified as hazardous/special waste

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- Damage to your property and interruption to your business and third party/neighbouring businesses
  - Insurance premiums are likely to rise substantially following a major fire, or you may not be able to secure insurance renewal at any economic cost – a major fire could effectively put you out of business
  - Reputational costs can be substantial and may affect how the local community and others view you
  - A major fire could affect your environmental permit/licence/exemption including any subsistence or other fees you pay. Many environmental permits/waste management licences have a requirement for you to operate your site to a written management plan. Even if your permit/licence/exemption does not explicitly state this you will still have a duty to prevent damage to the environment
  - If you lease your site a major fire could result in the termination of lease, or burdensome conditions being added to any lease
- 1.1.3 No one wants to have a fire, but the consequences of a major fire can be disastrous. Simply ignoring or underestimating the risk is not acceptable (legally, morally, commercially or operationally).

## 1.2 Scope of guidance

- 1.2.1 This guidance applies to sites where more than 50 cubic metres of solid combustible waste material is stored at any one time, although the principles will apply to smaller sites. You should also consider this guidance for below 50 cubic metres sites if they pose significant risks to human health and/or the environment in the event of a fire.
- 1.2.2 Sites which are regulated under an environmental permit/licence/exemption are within the scope of this guidance, no matter their location. The principles of this guidance also apply to sites which are not regulated under a permit/licence/exemption. Whether under a formal permit or not, you must always comply with regulatory standards.
- 1.2.3 This guidance applies to the storage, treatment and handling of wastes such as, but not limited to:
- Paper, cardboard, plastics, wood and wood products of all types
  - Rubber (natural or synthetic), including whole, shredded, crumbed tyres
  - Fragmentiser wastes, such as that from vehicle dismantling
  - Refuse derived fuels (RDF), solid recovered fuels (SRF) and similar
  - Any other waste which may pose a fire risk similar to the above

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- 1.2.4 WISH covers England, Scotland and Wales. This guidance is aimed at sites in these countries, although the principles outlined are not generally confined by national boundaries.
- 1.2.5 This guidance supplements but does not replace any statutory requirements under Local Acts of Parliament, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 or other applicable legislation.
- 1.2.6 Because of their specific issues and existing guidance this document does not apply specifically to:
- Landfill sites (but, it would apply to a recycling plant at the entrance to a landfill site)
  - Composting sites, including in-vessel, green waste composting and anaerobic digestion plants
  - Hazardous/special waste treatment and transfer facilities
  - Waste to energy plants, incinerators and similar thermal treatments to the extent of the thermal treatment applied. It would, however, apply to a recycling plant as pre-treatment, reception/storage and mechanical handling of wastes etc at such a facility
  - Some specific aspects of ELV (end of life vehicles) operations, such as air-bag dismantling. However, the general principles in this guidance do apply to ELV
  - Sites which fall under the COMAH (Control Of Major Accidents Hazards) Regulations
- 1.2.4 This guidance applies to fire risks associated with combustible wastes. It does not provide detailed guidance on reducing fire risk from ancillary facilities on sites such as welfare facilities, offices and similar or specific fire risks such as diesel storage tanks, gas cylinder storage and similar. You must refer to general and specific guidance for the control of fire risks associated with these non-solid waste aspects. You must also consider the risk from, and to, these facilities in your overall fire plan and assessment as they could be the source of a fire, contribute to its severity or be affected by a fire.
- 1.2.5 It is anticipated that sector specific waste management fire guidance will be produced by specific trade bodies and similar. Where these add to operator knowledge of specific waste types and/or technologies and where appropriate WISH will signpost such sector specific documents in future revised versions of this overall guidance.
- 1.2.6 If you do not follow this guidance or appropriate sector specific guidance, you should ensure that the measures you take are equivalent or superior, and that they comply with regulatory requirements.



## 1.3 Regulators

- 1.3.1 In most workplaces, including most solid waste management sites, your local Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) is responsible for enforcing general fire safety (under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order) and if you need advice you should contact them first.
- 1.3.2 Other regulators also have responsibilities: The HSE (Health and Safety Executive) covers specific risks and legislation such as DSEAR (Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations) and environmental regulators (such as the Environment Agency, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Environment Protection Agency) cover environmental risks from fires at waste management sites and other permitted sites handling the waste types described in 1.2.2 above.
- 1.3.3 Having a fire plan agreed with your FRA may not mean that you have satisfied all of the requirements of your environmental regulator. Likewise being compliant with your environmental permit/licence or similar may not mean you have complied with fire and safety law requirements. You must ensure you have covered all aspects of fire management in your assessments and plans. Please note that it is your duty as an operator to comply and not the duty of regulators to ensure your compliance.

## 1.4 Insurers

- 1.4.1 While not a regulator, insurers have a role to play and may set their own standards. You should consult with your insurer to ensure that they are involved in your decision-making process, assessments and plans. You may achieve a standard that your regulators are content protects human health and the environment adequately, but which your insurers may not be content with because of property and business interruption risks – different stakeholders may concentrate on different issues.

**Tip** – gaining advice on the technical aspects fire safety can be expensive. Insurers and insurance brokers can often be a good source of free or low charge advice. Many insurers have in-house fire technical experts and they have a vested interest in you not having a fire – if you have a major fire your insurer will also suffer cost implications. Insurers are an important stakeholder in your fire plans and can often offer good advice.

## 1.5 Assessment and plans

1.5.1 In general under fire legislation you must carry out an assessment of fire risks at your site, and based on this assessment put in place appropriate controls and measures (your „fire plan“). General guidance on fire risk assessments and plans is available on the gov.uk web site (see appendix 5 on useful links and further reading). However, broadly a fire risk assessment involves:

- Identifying where on your site you have combustible and/or flammable materials
- Identifying where on your site you have potential ignition sources
- Identifying who or what (such as the environment) may be affected and how
- From the above information putting in place your plan of controls and measures aimed at reducing the risk of a fire occurring and the impact should a fire occur

1.5.2 It is your duty as an operator to produce your fire risk assessment and from this put in place appropriate controls and measures as part of your fire plan. You may seek the advice of regulators, but in the end it is not the duty of a regulator to ensure your fire assessment and plan is adequate – this is your duty.

**Tip** – fire risk assessments and plans can be complicated issues and you are likely to need competent advice if your site is at all complex. However, various cost-effective training courses are available and you could consider having one of your employees trained in fire risk assessment. This would give you an accessible source of fire assessment advice for basic and general issues at an operational level.

1.5.3 Controls and measures as part of your fire plan may be physical, such as fire fighting equipment or the segregation of combustible materials to prevent fire spread, or procedural, such as evacuation and emergency plans. For example:

- Your fire risk assessment may identify that wastes in reception areas (a combustible material) may be set on fire by hot exhausts on heavy mobile plant (an ignition source). You may decide that an appropriate control would be to instruct plant operatives to clear wastes from around exhausts at the end of each shift – and you should include this in your instructions/procedures to plant operatives
- You may identify that wastes (a combustible material) going through a shredder at your site (potential ignition source for reasons of friction and/or sparks) may be a fire risk. You may decide that an appropriate control measure would be to install a water drench or sprinkler system at the shredder

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- You may identify that stored baled wastes (a combustible material) in your external storage yard may be set alight in an arson attack. You may decide that enhancing your security arrangements would be an appropriate control
- 1.5.4 Fire risk assessments need not be complicated, although you must ensure that you have identified all possible sources of fire and have appropriate controls in place.
- 1.5.5 As stated above in 1.5.1 you must also include in your assessment who and/or what (such as the environment) may be harmed by a fire and/or the consequences of a fire. For the environment you should use the established model of: source; pathway; and receptor. For example, if a fire occurs it is likely that water will be used to fight it, at least initially. This firewater will be contaminated with combustion products and other harmful substances. Where will this firewater run to and could it cause environmental damage? Your controls and measures should address this type of consideration. Guidance on the management of firewater is contained in CIRIA Report 736 (see further reading section in appendix 5 below).
- 1.5.6 It is also recommended that as part of your plan that you discuss with your local Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) their likely fire fighting strategy for your site, which may include a controlled burn to reduce firewater run-off and/or for fire fighter safety, and if water is to be used an estimate of the likely volumes of firewater that will be produced to help you determine how much containment will be required. Likely FRS fire response should be part of your assessment process.
- 1.5.7 For waste management sites there may also be conditions in your environmental permit/licence/exemption regarding issues such as maximum waste input and/or storage limits, requirements for environmental protection etc. These are a valid input into your assessment and must be included. Even if no such limits are stated in your licence or permit the physical limitations of your site will impose practical limits to the amounts of waste can be handled and stored safely. These limitations should be assessed and considered as part of your fire risk assessment.
- 1.5.8 For some aspects of your fire management you may need to consult specialist guidance or take competent advice. For example:
- If you store gas cylinders (either for your use or waste cylinders) then you need to take account of this in your assessment and seek advice on issues such as cylinder cage construction and separation distances for cylinder stores

- If your waste processing plant includes dust extraction you may need to conduct a hazardous area classification (zoning) exercise under DSEAR.

1.5.9 Whatever the complexity or otherwise of your assessment the aim should be to ensure you have considered all of the risks and put in place appropriate controls and measures.

## 1.6 Technical standards

1.6.1 In common with many other areas of health and safety and environmental practice there is no shortage of technical standards applied to specific aspects of fire control: These include:

- British Standards (BS Standards)
- European Standards (EN or BSEN Standards)
- Building Regulations and Standards (may vary from country to country)
- Insurance industry standards (see tip-box below)

1.6.2 For such technical aspects of fire controls, such as specialist fire fighting equipment and the standards for the installation of detection systems, you are very likely to require external specialist advice unless you hold specialist competence in-house. There is little point, for example, in installing a complex sprinkler or drench system if it is not to an adequate technical specification, has not been installed correctly and/or does not meet your specific fire fighting needs.

**Tip** – the insurance industry has produced its own guidance on many aspects of fire safety management, including technical standards: Ask your insurer for advice as they will have access to these standards. For example, the guidance contained in standards and technical advice produced by the UK insurance industry through Fire Protection Association/RISC-A and the LPS standards, now produced by BRE Global. Useful other documents include those produced by the US NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) and FM Insurance (FM Global Data Sheets – see appendix 5 for link). These standards are generally accepted by insurers and their technical advisors/experts. If your site does not meet these standards then the purchase of insurance cover, or availability of insurance at an economic cost, may be difficult. Asking for insurer advice on technical standards in advance is likely to be better than arguing afterwards.

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**Tip** – for technical standards relating to issues such as the installation of fire detection, fire fighting and fire suppression equipment, the suppliers of such equipment and reputable trade associations can often be a useful (and likely free) source of advice (although beware commercial interest and in some cases contradictory advice). Such suppliers, especially when they hold third party certification will be familiar with applicable standards for the products they supply and how they should be installed. However, care should be exercised to ensure that your choice of equipment and supplier is appropriate to your site. For example, an installer of domestic fire equipment may not be that familiar with the standards required for industrial applications.

1.6.3 Overall the technical standards applied to fire controls are complex and you need to be reassured that whatever controls you put in place meet these standards. If in doubt contact your local Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) who should be able to advise you.



## 2. Whole site considerations

Typically, most waste management sites have three main areas of operation:

- A reception area/s where incoming wastes are discharged
- Treatment/processing area/s where wastes may be sorted, shredded, dried, sized etc
- Storage area/s where both incoming wastes and outgoing wastes may be stored

These three main areas are considered in detail in sections 5, 6 and 7. This section covers considerations which may apply to the whole of your site and you should consider these before moving to site-specific issues.

### 2.1 Protection of human life

2.1.1 Fire management processes must start with the protection of human life. This would include having adequate fire escape provision which is clearly marked, lit where required, not blocked and which is kept unlocked during operational hours and effective evacuation procedures in which all staff are trained. You must ensure that you consult with existing guidance and your competent advisor to ensure that your fire management starts with the protection of human life.

### 2.2 Location and neighbouring sites/businesses/environment

2.2.1 If you suffer a fire it may have an impact on your neighbours, such as smoke being blown towards a residential area. Conversely, a fire at neighbouring premises may affect you and may even spread to your site. Your general location may also affect the level of fire controls you put in place. For example, if your site is isolated it may take some time for the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) to respond

2.2.2 Factors which you may need to consider in your fire assessment include:

- Are there any sensitive receptors including schools, hospitals, major transport or other key infrastructure (such as main roads, railways, airports, power lines etc), other businesses, shops, residential areas, rivers, canals and protected habitats that could be effected by a fire at your site?
- Where your assessment indicates that there is a risk to sensitive receptors, then you must work with your local FRS and your environmental regulator to reduce the risk and potential consequences of a fire

- Do any neighbouring premises pose fire risks to your site or could a fire at your site have a catastrophic effect on neighbouring premises? For example, gas storage facilities or other hazardous material storage/treatment site, garages and workshops storing fuels and similar. If this is the case you should liaise with these neighbours to ensure your and their accident/emergency plans take account of the possible risks. And, you may decide to arrange storage so that it is adequately separated from any higher-risk neighbouring premises. You may also want to hold joint fire/emergency plan drills and tests with your neighbours to ensure that in the event of a fire your response is co-ordinated
- How isolated is your site and what is the response time of the local FRS? Are your site fire fighting provisions and water supply adequate to any delay in the FRS arriving?

## 2.3 General ignition sources and precautions

2.3.1 From industry experience, it is worth noting the general issues below in particular:

- While your employees may know your site rules and what to do in the event of a fire, you must also ensure all visitors, contractors and drivers using your site are aware of the correct safety and fire prevention procedures to follow whilst on site
- Discarded smoking materials are a major ignition source. You should apply a no smoking policy or ensure suitable designated smoking areas are provided, situated away from combustible materials. Any designated smoking areas should be signposted and supplied with a sand bucket or similar for discarded smoking materials
- You must control general sources of ignition such as heating pipes, naked flames, space heaters etc. Stacks of combustible and flammable materials such as waste stacks and fuel storage areas should be at least 6 metres away from these sources
- As appropriate to your location you should put site security measures in place, such as security fencing, intruder alarms and CCTV, to minimise the risk of vandalism and arson. Your arrangements should cover both the working day and outside normal hours. If your site is located in an area where vandalism and similar is common you should consider a 24 hours manned security presence, or at least 24 hour coverage such as by drive-by security runs
- Electrical faults, both in processing equipment and general electrical systems, such as lighting and heating, can be a source of ignition. You should have regular and planned inspections of your systems. This should include portable electrical appliances (PAT) testing and fixed electrical equipment. You should also seek competent advice on issues such as grounding and bonding controls for electrical systems

- Fires may smoulder undetected after the end of the working day/shift. You should consider formal site „close-down“ procedures including inspection of the site after work has ceased to reduce the risk of a smoulder being undetected and turning into a fire
- Take advice on how to reduce the potential for fire to be spread by convection across the underside of roofs, through roof spaces and similar barriers to rising hot gases. In the Bradford stadium fire a significant cause of loss of life was the hot gasses rising under one part of the stadium roof, travelling along the roof and then descending many metres away at the other end of the stadium upon the spectators there causing asphyxiation and sparking significant secondary fires

## 2.4 Housekeeping and dusts

- 2.4.1 In general the smaller the particle size of a combustible material the easier it may be to set alight and the more fiercely it may burn. Likewise it is generally easier to set alight loose and free/discarded materials than compacted materials. In particular dusts may pose a distinct fire risk if they come into contact with hot surfaces and other ignition sources.
- 2.4.2 Some specific aspects of dust control and fire are included in section 4 on waste treatment. However, in general on dusts, small particle size combustible wastes, loose wastes and housekeeping you should:
- Introduce a regular maintenance and cleaning programme for all site areas including site machinery and buildings and ensure good house-keeping. This should aim to keep levels of dust, loose fibre and paper and other combustible materials in buildings and around the site to a minimum
  - Ensure that as part of your housekeeping that flammable materials, such as oils, greases, fuels, paints etc, are always stored correctly and put back in store after use
  - Include housekeeping in your routine site inspections and act to keep your site as free from loose/discarded combustible wastes and dusts as practical

## 2.5 Heavy mobile plant

- 2.5.1 Most waste management sites use heavy mobile plant, such as loading shovels, grabs and telescopic handlers. This plant can lead a hard life and is inevitably in direct contact with waste, much of which may be combustible. Mobile plant can pose ignition risks to the wastes they come into contact with:



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- Hot exhausts can ignite wastes trapped near them. You should instruct plant operators of this risk and ensure that wastes are cleared from around exhausts at the end of each shift
- Mobile plant should be fitted with fire extinguishers and you may wish to fit automatic fire extinguishing equipment under plant engine bonnets and other high risk areas
- You should ensure that mobile plant is well maintained to a specified schedule, in particular electrical systems which may be a source of fires. Note that maintenance schedules specified by suppliers of plant may not be adequate for waste management use and you should consider whether you need to put in place more frequent maintenance
- Mobile plant should be parked after use away from waste stacks, waste left in reception areas and other places where wastes may be present
- Mobile plant shovels, blades and similar may produce sparks such as when scraped along a concrete or metal surface/wall. You should consider this during your assessment. For high-risk areas and materials, you may even want to consider precautions such as specialist coatings for mobile plant shovels and blades to limit or prevent the generation of sparks

2.5.2 In addition to the fire risk heavy mobile plant poses, plant may also be useful in tackling fires, such as:

- Spreading wastes out so that a fire can be more easily tackled
- By removing wastes which are not on fire away from the location of a fire to prevent fire spread, such as by „sweeping“ un-ignited wastes away from a pile of waste which is partially on fire or by moving waste stacks away from a stack which is on fire
- By removing wastes which are on fire to a different location where fire fighting may be easier, such as by moving waste from inside a covered reception hall to the outside: In essence taking the fire outside where it can be fought more effectively, although consideration should be taken as to where burning waste is moved to as it could spread a fire through means such as wind-blown embers/brands
- By pushing soils or other inert material over a fire to starve it of oxygen

2.5.3 However, if you intend in your accident/emergency plan to use heavy mobile plant in this manner you must ensure:

- That plant operatives are trained and competent in the task – and that they are completely aware that any such action must only be done without risk to their own health and safety or that of others

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- That the heavy mobile plant is suitable to the task, such as by having completely enclosed cabs, fire and heat protected hydraulic systems etc
- Such action is included in your site accident/emergency plan

**Tip** – if you intend to use heavy mobile plant to fight fires you should conduct drills with your plant operators. For example, by practicing sweeping wastes away from a stack/pile or pushing inert materials over wastes. The retro-fitting of fire and heat protection systems to heavy mobile plant can be expensive. It is often an inexpensive addition to the specification at the point of manufacture. When replacing your heavy mobile plant think about its specification in advance.

## 2.6 Hot works

2.6.1 Hot works, such as welding, grinding and cutting, take place at many waste management sites on a regular basis, such as during maintenance and repair. You should at least:

- Ensure staff and any contractors follow safe working practice when undertaking hot working, such as welding, grinding and cutting
- Ensure that fire extinguishers, hoses etc are provided at the scene of any hot work so that they can be used immediately should a fire occur. Such equipment should be stationed adjacent to the pathway of escape from the work area and not in a place where staff using them could be trapped by fire
- In areas where wastes or other combustible materials are present hot work should be a two-person job: One person doing the hot work and a second watching – someone who is welding will rarely look behind them at where any sparks may land
- So far as practical wastes should be cleared away from the area of any hot work before hot work starts
- Potentially combustible materials, including mobile plant hydraulic lines, should be covered by a fire blanket and/or damped down with water as appropriate before hot work starts
- Conduct a fire watch at the scene of any hot work at least one 1 hour after hot work has finished – sparks from hot work can smoulder for a significant time period
- You may want to put in place a permit to work system to ensure that appropriate controls are in place before, during and after any and all forms of hot work

## 2.7 Site/plant shut-down processes

2.7.1 A significant number of waste site fires occur after working hours. To reduce this risk you should consider a formal close-down procedure including issues such as:

- Over-run of shredders, conveyors, screens etc to ensure that they are as clear of waste as practical
- Shut-off and lock-off of electrical power to the plant
- Shut-off of other electrical items such as heaters
- Clearance of waste which have accumulated under equipment
- Ensuring that any flammable materials such as fuels have been secured
- A fire-watch at least one hour after the end of operations
- Spread out any waste loads awaiting processing or in reception to ensure that there are no undetected hot items or other materials which could start a fire
- Check that mobile plant has been moved to a safe distance
- Check that fire detection systems have been activated
- Check that security systems have been activated and that gates etc are secure

## 2.8 Water supplies

2.8.1 While fire extinguishers may be useful in tackling small fires, the majority of larger waste fires are likely to be fought with water. If you do not have a sufficient water supply the outcome is likely to be predictable. Fire fighting a 300 cubic metre stack of combustible material will normally require a water supply of at least 2,000 litres a minute for a minimum of three hours. This is a total of 360,000 litres of water – 360 cubic metres/tonnes of water.

2.8.2 To put this into context, if you have three stacks of baled combustible waste of 300 cubic metres each (approximately three stacks of bales each 20 metres long, three bales high and 4 metres wide) it would take a pool of water 5 metres deep, 15 metres long and 15 metres wide to fight a fire in all three stacks. You should check:

- How good is the water supply to your site? If it is only a standard industrial supply it is unlikely to be able to provide sufficient water for significant fire fighting purposes
- How close is the nearest public hydrant to your site?
- If the nearest hydrant is more than 100 metres away, or your site is large, you should consider an on-site hydrant/s and/or installing a fire main to allow sufficient water to be available

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- If the above is not practical, do you need to install water storage tanks on your site?
- Are there alternative water sources near to your site, such as rivers, lakes, lagoons etc? And, could the Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) use these alternative sources? If you do identify alternative water sources such as lakes and rivers, you may also need to consult with your environmental regulator to ensure such use is appropriate

**Tip** – if you intend to use an alternative water source such as a lagoon, then consider particulates which may be in this source (such as mud, silt etc). You may need to consider large capacity filters and/or floating suction inlet to allow such water to be used – or face the potential for pipes and the pumps handling water from such sources blocking entirely or working at a much reduced effectiveness.

- 2.8.3 You should check you have adequate water supplies when you carry out your fire risk assessment. If you have any questions consult your local Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). As above, on larger sites the provision of a private fire hydrant system with the necessary supply of water may be required.
- 2.8.4 You should include in your assessment whether you would plan to use water to damp-down waste materials (such as stacks) which are not on alight during a fire to minimise the risk of fire spread – if this is the case then your water supply will need to be adequate to do this in addition to fighting a fire.
- 2.8.5 The location of hydrants, on or off site, should be included in your accident/emergency plan and should remain easily accessible. Hydrants should also be tested periodically to ensure they work.
- 2.8.6 If you have, or plan to, install fire fighting equipment such as water-spray/deluge or sprinkler systems, fixed water monitors etc then these will also have own water supply requirements. You should seek competent advice on your site's likely total water supply demand for fire fighting equipment to ensure it is adequate to the total demand required.

**Tip** – the technical standards on required water supplies for sprinklers, drenches etc are complex. Your insurer may have access to such technical standards (such as the FM Global Data Sheets and NFPA standards and relevant BS and EN standards) and may be able to provide such advice to you at low or no cost.

## 2.9 Firewater

2.9.1 Should a fire occur it will most likely be fought, at least initially, using water (although foams may also be used). This water will very likely be contaminated once it has been used to fight a fire. Foams may also pose risks to the environment. If this firewater/foam escapes from your site it may cause pollution – pollution you will likely be responsible for in terms of clean-up costs and potential civil or criminal action:

- All waste storage and stacks should be on an impermeable/fire resistant surface
- You should consider installing secondary and tertiary containment facilities for firewater run-off such as:
  - Bunds
  - Storage lagoons
  - Drain shut-off valves/penstocks
  - Isolation tanks
  - Modified areas of your site, such as a bunded car park to contain water
  - Block drains and/or divert firewater to a containment area or facility using pollution control equipment such as: firewater booms and drain mats

2.9.2 You may also wish to consider in consultation with the Fire and Rescue Services:

- Reducing the amount of firewater run-off by applying water through spray and fog-nozzles rather than jets or installing automatic fire suppression such as deluge systems which can apply water quickly and effectively directly to the heart of the fire
- Recycling firewater if it is not hazardous and it is possible to reuse
- Separating burning material from the fire and quench it with hoses or in pools, or in tanks of water. This has the advantage of reducing the amount of firewater produced
- A controlled burn – any decision to attempt a controlled burn must be taken by the FRS, in consultation with environmental and public health bodies, and should not be attempted by a site operator
- Burying the fire using soil, sand, crushed brick and/or gravel. This may be appropriate if there are limited water supplies and smoke is threatening local people, but it can only be used when:
  - Groundwater vulnerability is low
  - You have consulted your environmental regulator about this option beforehand
  - Contaminated material is removed and legally disposed of

**Tip** – Before deciding to smother or bury a fire consideration should be given to the likely timescales for the cooling and removal of the resulting entombment. Materials entombed in this way are likely to be insulated from heat loss and therefore liable to reignite upon re-exposure for periods of weeks, months or even years. If the decision is taken to smother a fire with a layer of inert material consideration should be given to ways of minimising the insulating effect of the smothering layer.

2.9.3 To decide which options, or combinations of options, is appropriate you should take account of the:

- Scale and nature of the environmental hazards on your site and the activities that take place on it
- Risks posed to people, the environment and property
- Type of materials you store on site, the form they are stored in and the length of time and the best strategy needed to extinguish a fire involving them
- Availability of firewater containment facilities
- Local topography and different weather conditions and fire scenarios that could be reasonably expected

2.9.4 The containment facilities and pollution equipment you need will depend on the size of your site, the amount of material you store and the fire fighting strategy. CIRIA C736 (see further reading and links appendix of this guidance) will help you identify the facilities and equipment you need for your site.

2.9.5 If you make a polluting discharge to the environment you will be committing an offence, unless you have a permit/consent to do so and the discharge meets the conditions of that permit/consent. Firewater discharges to sewer may also constitute a breach of sewage discharge consents and you should consult your sewage provider

## 2.10 Fire detection, alarm and suppression systems - overview

2.10.1 All fire-detection, alarm and suppression systems must be installed and maintained to the relevant standards by competent persons, such as companies with third party certification issued by an UKAS-accreditation body or other appropriate standard.

- For plant and equipment (such as recycling and recovery plant) fire detection, alarm and suppression must be part of the design risk assessment. For larger facilities the development of a separate fire strategy document is recommended

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- Consider multiple approaches to detection and suppression rather than simply choosing a single item. For example, in some cases using more than one type of detector may be more effective than relying on a single type of detector
- Buildings systems should be compliant with the relevant building regulations, as supplemented by your risk assessment to take account of waste management use
- All fire detection, alarm and suppression systems should be maintained in good order and tested and checked as required – seek the advice of your competent person to ensure you are maintaining and testing/checking your systems as required

2.10.2 Advice on suitable fire detection, alarm and suppression systems can be obtained from your competent person (such as specialist suppliers/contractors/designers as above), your local Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) and your insurer. However, in the end you are responsible for ensuring that your fire detection, alarm and suppression systems are adequate and you should devote sufficient time and resource to ensure that they are.

2.10.3 You should also check with your insurer. Some insurers have specific requirements for detection and suppression systems. This can vary from insurer to insurer. It is far easier, and cheaper, to install equipment during construction than have to retrofit it afterwards because your insurer requires a specific system if they are to insure you at all. For example, if your insurer requires sprinkler systems to be installed then this is much easier to achieve during construction rather than as a retro-fit item.

2.10.4 Once you have installed appropriate systems these must be checked, tested and maintained to ensure they remain effective. Some checks can be performed by site staff, such as routine weekly alarm tests. Other tests and checks should be performed by a competent supplier. Maintenance must be carried-out by a competent supplier.

2.10.5 Should your systems be impaired at any point (such as by damage, break-down etc) you should inform your insurer. If you do not and you have a fire you may find yourself uninsured. You may also want to inform your local FRS and initiate additional controls, such as a fire watch after operational hours.

**Tip** – it is very common for insurance policies and schedules to include specific requirements for the installation and checking and testing of fire detection, alarm and suppression systems. You should study your insurance policy and schedule carefully and ensure that you are doing the required tests and checks – or, face the possibility of not being insured if a fire occurs.

2.10.6 The following three chapters consider general options and considerations for detection, alarm and suppression systems. Specific considerations relating to the reception, treatment and storage of wastes are given in the relevant sections below (section 3 for reception, section 4 for treatment and section 5 for storage of wastes).

**Tip** – fire detection and suppression system technology is developing all of the time. Your competent advisor, insurer and/or the suppliers of fire equipment should be able to give advice on what is available on the market – just because you have always used a particular type of detector etc in the past does not mean that there is not something new and improved on the market.

## 2.11 Fire detection – general considerations

2.11.1 There are many options for detection systems. Some of those which may be applicable to waste management sites include:

- Aspirating fire detection system
- Spark, infrared or ultraviolet detection
- CCTV visual flame detection systems
- Flame detectors
- Linear wire heat detection (but, should be located away from potential damage by mobile plant)

2.11.2 If acceptable from your risk assessment the system can be programmed with a timer arrangement to be active only during non-operational hours. Fire/smoke detection systems in reception, processing and internal storage areas may be subject to false alarms because of dusts etc (although there are types which are better than others in this respect and you should consider what is the most effective and what is likely to be the most reliable systems at your site). During operational hours these areas should be occupied by operators who will spot a fire. However, think carefully before considering this. Will processing, reception and/or internal storage areas always be occupied during operational hours? If not, then detection systems must be active.

2.11.3 Your competent advisor or supplier will be able to advise you on the best options for your site. However, you may want to check that your advisor and/or supplier is familiar with waste management and/or similar industrial environments to ensure that your detection system is adequate and appropriate for waste management use.



## 2.12 Fire alarm – general considerations

2.12.1 On all but the most basic sites some form of automatic alarm system is likely to be required: Hand/manual bells and similar are unlikely to be appropriate unless a site is small and basic.

2.12.2 General considerations for alarm systems include:

- Alarms must be audible across the whole of a site. For larger sites this may mean repeater alarms in offices, welfare facilities etc. Where a site has multiple buildings the same principle applies – the alarm must be audible in all buildings
- Where noise may be an issue in making alarms audible, consideration should be given to visual back-up systems, such as strobe/flashing alarm beacons and lights
- For larger sites and/or isolated sites, or if your risk assessment identifies such, fire alarms should be monitored remotely at a permanently occupied location. This may be another site you operate which is open 24/7, your security alarm provider or specialist contractor. Whichever is the case you should lodge your accident/emergency plan with them so that they know who to contact in case of a fire

## 2.13 Fire suppression – general considerations

2.13.1 You should seek advice regarding suitable fire suppression systems. In some areas of the country specific requirements apply, particularly in inner-city areas where fire spread may be a higher-risk issue. However, the below are options dependent on the design and layout of your site:

- Manual open deluge system - pipework supplying open deluge/water-spray projectors (nozzles) installed on the walls around waste in reception and storage areas supplied with water from a FRS (Fire and Rescue Services) breaching inlet connection. This type of installation would not need a fixed water supply and would enable the FRS to apply water/foam directly into the waste. Note – to be effective you will need an adequate water supply to hand, such as fire hydrant (on or off site) within 100 metres or other suitable water supply
- Deluge/water-spray system – as above, but already connected to a suitable water supply (fire main, pumped water storage tank etc). Systems can either be manual or automatic (if automatic the use of heat and other detection systems rather than smoke sensors will reduce the possibility of spurious false activations)
- Mobile foam trolley- water supply to the trolley is via a hydrant or other suitable supply

- Hose reel systems – fire hoses from a suitable water supply. Hoses should be sufficient in terms of number and length to reach all parts of the reception area. Properly trained operatives are essential if such equipment is provided
- Water monitors/cannon – fire fighting water cannons at appropriate fixed points (if practical) fed by an appropriate water supply. However, beware of such systems if they are high-pressure as they may „blow“ wastes which are already burning in the reception area so igniting other waste
- Sprinkler systems - sprinkler systems where installed should be designed, installed, commissioned and maintained in accordance with the relevant standards (seek advice on this from your competent person and/or supplier). Note that systems being installed to satisfy insurers' conditions may also have to comply with other standards – consult with your insurer to ensure that you do not install a system they will not approve. The use of sprinklers will be most effective when installed inside buildings and covering storage areas, sorting areas and conveyors etc. In some situations, local application water-spray systems may be required
- Foam additives injected into sprinkler and water-spray systems may also be considered for sites accepting high volumes higher risk wastes, such as plastics. These will also reduce the volume of water needed to fight a fire

2.13.2 The option/s you choose should be informed by your fire risk assessment, and you should consult with your insurer to ensure that they are content before undertaking the purchase of any fire fighting system. Insurers will also usually have a view as to the selection of the type of equipment and the installer to be used. Many of the above options are only practical at enclosed areas. For external reception areas the installation of fire hoses may be a more practical option. In these cases staff must be trained in their use. However, some sites have installed deluge/water-spray and similar systems over external reception bunkers etc successfully and you should at least consider this approach.

## 2.14 Non-waste facilities on site

2.14.1 Virtually all waste management sites have office, weighbridge and welfare facilities and other non-waste facilities. While these are not included specifically in this guidance, you should seek competent advice on fire management in these general facilities and you must ensure you comply with the relevant standards such as those in buildings regulations and standards:

- Such buildings should be provided with fire/smoke detection and, as required, manual break-glass points unless all areas of the building can be seen from any other area (such as a single room cabin)
- Detection and alarm systems should be connected to the overall system for the site – that is any alarm will cause an alarm across the whole site and visa-versa
- At the least fire extinguishers of an appropriate type and number should be provided, along with training for personnel to use them
- Building standards requirements must be met for all such buildings
- In general waste stacks should be separated from such buildings by a gap of at least 10 metres, unless the building is protected in another suitable manner, or the waste is contained in a suitable bunker/enclosure with appropriate height and construction walls – even then such bunkers should not be right against buildings. Note – the 10 metres quoted above may not be sufficient for some types of waste and you should consult with your competent advice

## 2.15 Fire appliance access

2.15.1 If Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) vehicles cannot get onto your site and/or cannot access all areas of your site to fight a fire then the outcome may be disastrous.

2.15.2 Access for FRS vehicles to and around your site should be unobstructed at all times and meet as a minimum the requirements in the table below. You should also consider how fire appliances can turn around once they have entered your site. Points you may want to consider include:

- If the FRS cannot access all parts of your site (see distances etc in table below), can the FRS access around the edges of your site via a public highway or similar? If not, such as if your site is right against a neighbouring building, then you will need to consider stand-off between stacks and the edge of your site to allow access
- Is there more than one entrance to your site which Fire and Rescue Service vehicles can use? Are you restricted to one entrance and therefore have a need for easier access around your site?
- Are there on-site height restrictions, such as overhead power lines, bridges etc

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**Table: Typical FRS vehicle access requirements**

Type of FRS appliance	Min width of road (metres)	Min width of gateway (metres)	Min clearance height (metres)	Min weight restriction (tonnes)
Water tender	3.7	3.2	3.7	12.5
High reach vehicle	3.7	3.2	4.0	24
<i>Weight of vehicles may need to be confirmed with your local FRS as various types of vehicle are in use</i>				

2.15.3 If you have any doubts regards how FRS vehicles may be able to access your site, you should contact your local FRS and seek their advice.

2.15.4 Note – the above distances are for access to fight a fire by FRS vehicles. They are not distances primarily aimed at preventing or reducing the risk of fire spread such as between stacks of stored wastes. For guidance on such distances in external storage see appendix 1 and 2 below, and for general considerations on storage (both internal and external) see the section 5 on storage below.

## 2.16 Communication, training and drills

2.16.1 Many fires are averted by the swift action of aware, well trained, and well drilled staff. In the development of your fire assessment and fire plans you should give consideration to and describe:

- How the key features of the fire assessment will be communicated to the staff
- How frequently key messages will be reviewed and refreshed with staff through, for example toolbox talks
- What levels of training staff need to play their part in the fire emergency plan, how frequently that training will need to be refreshed and renewed, and what system will be put in place to ensure that training renewal dates are not missed or overlooked
- Drills and exercises should be undertaken at regular intervals and should be varied in content to address the range of fires and circumstances that might be encountered on the site. Drills should be conducted at least once a year, and more frequently for higher-risk sites
- The effectiveness of response to drills and exercises (and real fires) should be critically reviewed to identify improvements that need to be made and any messages that need to be fed back into the communications and training systems

## 3. Waste reception

All waste management sites have reception facilities:

- Enclosed tipping halls where waste is discharged prior to being fed into sorting or similar plant
- Split level reception areas
- Reception pits, where waste may be fed into processes by grab crane, conveyor or similar systems
- External reception areas for wastes such as wood prior to processing

Note – this section is aimed at the reception and temporary storage of wastes in reception for short periods of time, typically not exceeding 72 hours or shorter prior to treatment and/or transfer to another site (you must comply with any limits set in your environmental permit/licence). It does not cover specifically wastes stored prior to treatment or transfer for longer periods of time. If you store wastes for longer periods of time prior to treatment or transfer then you should also refer to the section 5 on the storage of wastes below.

### 3.1 Hot wastes and other hazards in reception

3.1.1 One of the main causes of fires in reception areas is the receipt of hot loads, or loads with hazardous materials in them such as gas cylinders or containers of flammable liquids, which can subsequently cause a fire. You should ensure you have robust waste acceptance procedures that prevent unauthorised waste being accepted, so far as practical, and for limiting their potential impact so far as prevention is not practical:

- Consider implementing a fire-watch at the end of the shift/operational day
- Consider not accepting higher-risk loads late in the working day, or processing such quickly rather than leaving them in reception over-night
- All employees in reception areas should be instructed to look for fires, hot loads, smoke and signs of smoulders – and what action to take if they see one (such as the use of heavy mobile plant to move suspect loads to a safe area, dousing suspect loads with water from a fire hose etc)
- Consider instructing your mobile plant operators to spread wastes out when they are received to make identification of smoulders and hazardous items easier
- Consider provision of an „emergency/quarantine area“ for suspect loads. Note – this must be different from your normal quarantine area for non-conforming loads as these may contain hazardous materials which you do not want to expose to hot wastes

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- Where detection of loads which may pose a hazard may be difficult, such as pit-type reception facilities, you should consider fitting drench or similar suppression systems to fight any fire which may occur and good standards of containment to reduce the risk of fire spread from reception to other areas

**Tip** – there will be times when the delivery of hot loads will be more likely and reminders to reception staff would be useful. Examples are the increased likelihood of “hot” barbecues and ashes in wastes delivered to HWRCs and from domestic sources after bank holiday weekends or during warm weather. Plus consider the likely increase in the appearance of hot ashes and other wastes from garden burners after the first warm dry weekends of spring and the potential presence of hot ashes from bonfires and the residue from fireworks in early November or at other times of celebration where bonfires and/or fireworks may be an issue.

- 3.1.2 If you do discover a hot load, or load containing hazardous materials, you should attempt to trace this back to the customer and take appropriate action to reduce the risk of such occurring again. You should also check your environmental permit/licence conditions and you may need to report such loads to your environmental regulator.

## 3.2 Fire detection/alarm at reception areas – specific considerations

- 3.2.1 For enclosed reception areas in buildings, reception pits and similar waste reception areas fire detection should be provided (see sections 2.11 and 2.12 for options and general considerations).
- 3.2.2 In addition adequate fire escape provision must be in place and all exit doors from enclosed reception areas should be provided with manual break-glass points.
- 3.2.3 For external waste reception areas providing fire detection may be more difficult. However, detection is possible and some sites have successfully installed camera type detectors over external reception bunkers and similar. Just because your reception area is outside does not mean that you should not consider detection in your assessment.
- 3.2.4 While this section applies to wastes in reception only for short periods of time, the greater the amount of waste in reception at any one time the higher the likely consequences should a fire occur. For large waste management and similar facilities where large amounts of waste are stored you should consult your competent advice regards detection and alarm provision.

**Tip** – conventional security CCTV can often be upgraded to include flame; fire or hot spot detection at fairly low cost, even as a retrofit. Detectors can suffer from problems such as dust. Some systems now include air-shields to reduce the impact of dust on the detector.

## 3.3 Suppression at reception areas – specific considerations

- 3.3.1 For the general options and considerations for fire suppression equipment at reception areas see section 2.13. Most of these options are most relevant to enclosed reception areas. However, at least an adequate water supply should be in place and the provision of fire hoses should be considered at external reception areas.
- 3.3.2 At some sites incoming materials are moved from waste reception directly into processing areas using conveyors or other mechanical handling systems. In such cases you will need to consider potential fire spread by such interconnection. You should consider provision of automatic fire suppression on conveyors to processing areas. You should also consider linking fire detectors so that transfer plant stops when a fire is detected to prevent the spread of a fire by mechanical transfer means.
- 3.3.3 In some waste reception areas items of recycling/recovery equipment are located directly in the reception area. For example, a shredder as pre-treatment before waste is fed into a main processing area. In such cases you should consider protection such as listed in section 4 on waste processing. For example, for a shredder located in a reception area installing a water deluge system at the shredder.
- 3.3.4 One potential problem with fighting fire in enclosed reception areas is smoke, which may obscure a fire and make it difficult for the Fire and Rescue Services to direct water direct to the seat of a fire. You may want to consider, subject to your risk assessment, passive or automatic smoke vents in the roof over reception areas. However, you must consider this carefully as vents can cause interaction problems with some fire detection and suppression systems resulting in a delay in activation – you should seek competent advice on this issue.
- 3.3.5 You should consider potential operational issues which may affect the effectiveness of any suppression system you have installed. For example, if you have installed a sprinkler or deluge system around your reception bunker/push-walls (in essence, a pipe with nozzles installed on top of or just above your push-walls). This is unlikely to work effectively if the height you are storing wastes at means such systems are buried. Likewise think about height for other reasons, such as waste piled to such a height that electrical lighting may pose an ignition risk.

## 3.4 Other considerations in reception

- 3.4.1 If during abnormal situations, such as plant breakdowns, you need to exceed your normal reception area capacity you should put in place additional measures, such as a fire watch outside of operational hours. Ultimately you may need to cease accepting wastes so as not to compromise the fire safety of your site.
- 3.4.2 Finally on reception areas, your waste reception area has a finite, safe capacity and you should not exceed this. Determine during your assessment what this capacity is and stick to it (there may also be conditions in your permit/waste management licence which must be followed).

**Tip** – try to think of obvious visual methods to guide your operative regards the maximum safe capacity in your reception area. For example, painting an obvious line on reception bunker walls above which waste must not be piled.





## 4. Waste treatment and processing

Waste processing systems vary widely and this guidance cannot cover all technologies used. However, many recycling/recovery systems commonly include:

- Shredding, bag opening and similar devices which may themselves pose an ignition risk though friction, sparks from metal-on-metal contact, blunt blades and other similar causes
- Trommel, flat and other screens, air-separators and other gravity based sorting systems. While these may not pose a high ignition risk, they are often close to items such as shredders. If a fire starts in a shredder or similar it may be just a smoulder because of a lack of oxygen: When fed into a trommel, air-separator etc the waste is then agitated and receives sufficient oxygen to ignite fully
- Mechanical handling systems, such as conveyors, if well maintained should not pose a high ignition risk, but they can transport already alight waste rapidly around a plant so accelerating the spread of a fire
- De-dusting, cyclone and other similar devices – there may be a risk of dust explosion and you should seek specialist competent advice on these items
- Mains/electrical plant rooms which may pose higher-voltage electrical ignition risks and control panels for items of recycling/recovery equipment

Each of the above common types of equipment is considered below. However, there are other items of equipment used in recycling/recovery systems such as optical sorting systems, magnetic and eddy current processes and other specific recycling/recovery equipment – you should assess any specific fire risks associated with other equipment you may use. You should seek competent advice on this.

### 4.1 General ignition risks in processing

4.1.1 In addition to the above specific risks, recycling/recovery plant may pose other general ignition risks (the presence of waste is a given as a potential fuel source), such as:

- Electrical faults, faulty or damaged wiring causing sparks and heating
- Friction from slipping conveyors, damaged or worn bearings, damaged or worn drive motors
- Direct heat from drive motors and other items which may generate heat
- Direct heat from specific items of equipment

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- 4.1.2 You should seek advice from your competent person as to what fire suppression and management measures need to be taken. However, the following offers some general consideration for the common recycling plant and ignition risks noted above.
- 4.1.3 At some sites processing equipment may be located outside, such as a mobile wood shredder in an open yard, and the fire suppression etc systems listed below may not be practical in such applications. However, this type of equipment often already comes with its own fire fighting system installed, such as an automatic extinguisher system built-into a shredder. You may want to consider this type of system. At the least you should consider how you would fight a fire in such equipment. For example, would your fire hoses reach such equipment located in an open yard?

## 4.2 Shredders, bag openers and similar

- 4.2.1 This type of equipment poses a higher risk of ignition from friction and/or metal-on-metal and similar contact. In addition, as they are often well enclosed for valid machinery safety reasons, fighting a fire may be more difficult as it may not be easy to get at. You should consider installing water deluge or sprinkler type systems either in permanent shredder etc housings to extinguish fires, or at conveyor outputs from shredders etc to prevent fire spread.

## 4.3 Trommel screens, other screens, air-separators and similar

- 4.3.1 While trommel screens and similar may not pose a high ignition risk they can aerate wastes resulting in a smoulder turning into a full fire. You should consider installing water deluge or sprinkler type systems either in trommel etc housings to extinguish fires, or at conveyor outputs from trommel screen etc to prevent fire spread.

## 4.4 Mechanical handling systems, conveyors etc

- 4.4.1 Conveyors and similar mechanical handling systems may carry a fire rapidly through your plant, and they may be an ignition source themselves as a result of friction:
- Consider conveyor water deluge/sprinkler systems, as identified by your risk assessment. These may be under-conveyor, over-conveyor or to the side of conveyors with deflection plates to divert water onto the conveyor. Under-conveyor systems may pose issues such as being more open to damage and/or causing a restriction to maintenance activities and over/side-conveyor systems may be better

- Consider installing slip sensors on conveyors to determine if a conveyor is slipping on its drive roller – the friction caused by such slippage may pose an ignition risk
- Fire alarm and detection systems should be connected to plant control systems so that if a fire is detected the plant stops, so preventing burning wastes being transported through your plant

## 4.5 De-dusting systems, cyclones etc

4.5.1 The separation/ventilation of dusts and fines using extraction systems, cyclones and similar may pose dust explosion risks. For some of this type of equipment parts of the system such as at bag filters etc may be classified as hazardous areas (commonly called „zoning“):

- Such systems should be subject to an assessment under the DSEAR (Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations) and may require hazardous area classification (zoning) – you should seek competent advice on this
- Where required by a DSEAR assessment, controls such as spark detection/suppression, pressure release systems (such as blast panels) and water deluge systems or similar should be installed
- Any hazardous areas (zones) must be identified and signed – and employees should be aware of any such zones and the precautions to take
- The standards for electrical and other equipment in such systems are likely to be higher than for general electrical systems (ATEX rated) and you should seek competent advice on this
- Maintenance of DSEAR compliant systems should only be undertaken by a competent person, you may need to check on the competency of contractors or others undertaking this work – a general industrial electrical contractor may not have the knowledge required
- Ductwork associated with de-dusting and similar systems may provide an easy pathway for a fire to spread – that is through the ductwork. You may need to consider suppression systems in ductwork to prevent such fire spread

4.5.2 De-dusting and similar systems are often aimed at the beneficial control of dusts around a plant. However, such systems may also concentrate the hazard posed and de-dusting and similar systems need careful consideration and very likely specialist competent advice on their operation, maintenance and repair.

**Tip** – the materials transfer points at the end of conveyors are often a significant generator of dusts and also often the first areas to be enclosed as part of dust control measures. Such enclosures typically encompass the conveyor end bearings, which can become hot and pose a source of ignition. Suitable fire and explosion measures to address these risks need not be expensive if considered as part of the design and installation of the enclosure.

## 4.6 Mains/electrical plant rooms and control panels

4.6.1 Mains/electrical plant rooms and control panels pose specific issues, largely associated with the electrical ignition risk they pose:

- Mains/electrical plant rooms should be enclosed and constructed to appropriate fire resistance standards (consult your competent advisor). For critical installations you may want to go beyond the usual standards applied for property and business interruption risk reasons
- Points where cables leave and enter mains rooms via ducts, tunnels etc should be appropriately sealed to prevent fire spread via such „holes“ in the integrity of the room
- Thermal imaging cameras used in regular surveys can be of use to detect electrical faults early and reduce the risks involved
- Mains/electrical plant rooms should be supplied with suitable (usually CO<sub>2</sub>) extinguishers and doors to mains rooms should have vision panels to allow a fire to be seen before entry
- Control panels should either be located in enclosed rooms or constructed to a suitable IP (protection) standard to prevent dust ingress
- Electrical rooms should be fitted with automatic fire detection and manual call points. Depending on business criticality, such rooms or specific panels may also be fitted with automatic fire suppression

## 4.7 General considerations in processing areas

4.7.1 General considerations for fire management in waste processing areas include:

- Housekeeping in process areas needs to be of a good standard. Dust should be cleared from electrical conduits and systems and drive motors (and any other item of equipment which may produce heat or be an ignition source, such as optical sorting equipment)

- Thermal imaging cameras may be used to detect hot-spots around your plant, such as slipping conveyors, over-heating drive motors, faulty electrical systems etc. Such thermal imaging surveys need not be conducted every day, but can be part of routine maintenance and inspection regimes
- Hydraulic systems, including hydraulic oil tanks, may generate significant heat. In addition, most hydraulic oils are flammable and leaks from hydraulic lines and systems may result a fire which can spread quickly to wastes. In particular if the waste has been doused in hydraulic fluid from a leak first. Fires in mists and sprays of leaking hydraulic oils are a particular risk and can be highly dangerous. You should include hydraulic systems in your routine checking, testing and maintenance systems and you may want to consider installing fire suppression systems at/above hydraulic power packs, or using non-flammable hydraulic oils

## 4.8 Fire suppression in processing areas – specific considerations

- 4.8.1 For the general options and considerations for fire suppression equipment in processing areas see section 2.13 above. However, the technologies used in waste processing vary widely and you should ensure that the fire suppression option/s you go for are appropriate for your technology.
- 4.8.2 Specifically for waste processing areas you should consider the below in addition to the general options given in section 2.13 above. Please also note that some insurers may require specific suppression equipment to be in place. Check with your insurer to ensure that you comply with such requirements.
- Consider platform level sprinkler systems under picking cabins where there are bunkers under cabins containing combustible wastes. Where bunkers are used for various wastes all bunkers should be considered for protection
  - Consider platform level sprinklers for areas below conveyors and walkways greater than 1m wide where combustible waste falls and collects. Or alter the process and place containment barriers to prevent the fall-off occurring, such as higher conveyor sides so that wastes remain on conveyors
  - Roof level sprinkler system if identified as part of your risk assessment. Sprinkler systems where installed should be designed, installed, commissioned and maintained in accordance with relevant rules and standards and the requirements of your insurer
  - Baler fire extinguisher coverage – while balers are generally well protected (being encased) aerosols and similar can result in fires during operation. The baler area and control position should be provided with sufficient fire extinguisher coverage

- Picking cabins, control rooms and similar should be provided with appropriate fire extinguishers, manual call-points and automatic fire detection. You may also want to consider sprinklers or other suppression equipment in these rooms
- 4.8.3 In summary, the fire suppression systems you decide upon should be appropriate to your own plant and the above are only examples. You should seek competent advice, decide on what you will do and then do it.
- 4.8.4 You would also be wise to consult with your insurer to ensure that they are content with what you decide upon. In terms of financial loss, the highest cost fires often occur when recycling/recovery plant is damaged or destroyed. As such, your insurer may have specific requirements to limit such losses and you should consult with them. The cost of installing fire suppression systems, such as sprinklers and drench systems, may be significant, but is unlikely to be as significant as the costs associated with a major fire and may bring savings in reduced insurance costs.

**Tip** – in general the most expensive (in cost terms) fires at waste management and similar sites are those which result in damage to plant and equipment. Business interruption issues may also be higher if plant is down for an extended period of time as the result of a fire. Your insurers are likely to concentrate on this aspect as this is where your highest likely financial losses may be in the event of a fire. You need to take account of this as your insurer is an important stakeholder.

## 4.9 Fire detection/alarm in processing areas

- 4.9.1 See sections 2.11 and 2.12 for options and general considerations for detection and alarm in processing areas. As for fire suppression systems, the wide variety of technologies used in waste processing means that you are likely to require competent advice on the best solution for your plant. For example, in MBT (mechanical biological treatment) plants and similar carbon monoxide sensors in air outlets may be suitable for detection. Your supplier, designer for new plants and insurer should be able to provide such advice. With suppliers you may wish to check that they have adequate waste management and/or industrial experience and knowledge to provide adequate advice to select an appropriate system.

4.9.2 Specific considerations in waste processing areas on detection and alarm include:

- Exits from picking cabins, control rooms and similar should be provided with manual break-glass points
- Picking cabins should be provided with suitable smoke/heat detection systems – and these must not be turned off during operational hours
- Fire/smoke detection systems should be fitted in mains/electrical plant rooms
- Fire detection and alarm systems should be connected to plant control systems. Should a fire alarm be activated it should act in the same way as pressing an emergency stop and should stop the plant to prevent rapid fire spread

## 4.10 Protecting your plant by separation/segregation

4.10.1 You should consider how your processing area is separated by distance and/or segregated by appropriately constructed barriers, such as walls, from waste storage and reception areas. In fire safety terms such separation/segregation of areas of a building is often called splitting into „compartments“, the aim of which is to prevent fire spread This should be two-way:

- If a fire occurs in your waste storage and/or waste reception, how is your processing plant protected from fire spread?
- If a fire occurs in your waste processing area, how is fire spread to waste storage or waste reception controlled?

4.10.2 For example, you may want to consider the use of walls and/or push walls of an appropriate construction to segregate waste reception from waste processing to prevent fire spread, or to locate waste storage well away from waste processing. Or, you may need to consider other compartment techniques such as installation of wall-protecting drench systems, suppression systems in transfer conveyors and similar. The principle being to provide a physical barrier between compartments, or where this is not 100% practical protect compartments in other ways.

**Tip** – your insurer is likely to place much importance on the integrity of the compartments in your building, in particular if a compartment contains expensive plant which should a fire occur may result in a high-value insurance claim. This may be difficult at waste management sites where wastes need to travel between compartments for the process to work, such as holes in walls to allow conveyors to pass through. Discuss this aspect with your insurer and consider how you will prevent fire spread between compartments.

## 5. Waste storage – general considerations

Many waste management sites store combustible wastes: Either wastes brought to site and awaiting processing and/or transfer or wastes/products which have already been processed and are awaiting transport off site. Examples of such wastes include, but are not limited to:

- Baled recyclates such as paper, cardboard and plastics
- Baled and wrapped SRF/RDF and other waste fuels
- Loose wood, hard plastics, tyres etc

Note – this section is not aimed at the temporary storage of wastes in reception for short periods of time typically not exceeding 72 hours or shorter prior to treatment and/or transfer to another site. Rather it covers longer-term storage of wastes. For guidance on waste reception areas see section 3 above.

Waste storage at waste management sites can be internal (inside a building) or external (such as in stock yard). This section covers general considerations applicable to both external and internal storage. Section 6 covers issues specific to external storage and section 7 those applicable to internal storage. These sections should be read together to gain an overall picture of what is required.

### 5.1 Definitions of terms used in storage sections

5.1.1 For consistency, the following terms are used in all sections/appendices on storage:

- **Stacks** - stored accumulations of all forms of stored wastes, whether baled, open or otherwise stored
- **Bunkered/enclosed stacks** – wastes (either loose or baled etc) stored in a bunker or enclosure, such as a three-sided enclosure, where the walls of the enclosure are of an appropriate construction resulting in an effective fire shield
- **Open stacks** – wastes (loose or baled etc) which are not stored in bunkers / enclosures, such as an open stack of paper bales or open stack of loose wood
- **Loose** – wastes which have not been baled/wrapped, such as stacks of loose wood, tyres, plastic bottles etc. Such loose waste could be either bunkered, or open (such as an open pile of loose wood)
- **Baled/wrapped** – wastes which have been baled and/or wrapped, or similar, as discrete „packages/items“. Such baled/wrapped wastes could be either bunkered or open stacked



## 5.2 Calculating stack and storage capacity volumes and masses

- 5.2.1 In order to interpret information given in the storage appendices and sections of this guidance, you will need to be able to calculate the volume of your stacks and know the relationship between the mass (weight) of your wastes and their volume. Starting with volume:
- 5.2.2 For some types of stack calculating volume will be straightforward, such as for stacks of baled wastes which are arranged in a „square“ stack. In this case, volume will be:  $\text{Volume} = \text{length} \times \text{height} \times \text{width}$ . For other types of stack the calculation will be more complex. For example, if you have an open stack of loose wastes (that is a „cone“ of waste) then its volume can be calculated as being  $\text{volume} = 1/3 \times ((\pi \times \text{radius of stack}^2) \times \text{height of stack})$ .
- 5.2.3 For bunkered wastes the situation may require some degree of thought. For example, loose waste in a three-sided bunker will slump so a calculation using simply the width, height and length of the bunker will give an over-estimation. You might try assessing the volume in three parts: The „square“ portion of the waste completely within the bunker, the „cone“ of waste sitting on top of the square portion and a triangular section at the front of the bunker’s open side where the waste has slumped. That is, calculate the three separate volumes and then add them together to give a total volume. Whatever method you use, try to err on the side of caution.
- 5.2.4 Next you need to know the density of your waste – how much it weighs for any given volume. This is normally expressed as tonnes per cubic metre. You may be able to use weighbridge data to do this, such as by weighing some bales then using the dimensions of the bales to arrive at a density. Alternatively, the Environment Agency, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and WRAP have all produced standard „waste density conversion factors“. These give density conversion factors for various wastes as classified under EWC codes which allow volumes of waste to be converted to weights.
- 5.2.5 When calculating storage area capacities:
- For wastes stored in bunkers/enclosures (such as three-sided walled structures) capacity should be calculated accounting for waste „slump“ (many wastes will not store in neat cubes and the capacity of bunkers etc will not be a simple matter of height x length x width)

- For wastes stored in bunkers/enclosures (such as three-sided walled structures) capacity should be calculated with waste not exceeding the height of the retaining walls at any point (where wall height varies the lowest wall height should be used)
- For open storage calculation of capacity is a matter of calculating the footprint of the area and then multiplying by the height of the stack. For baled wastes this will be fairly straightforward. For wastes stored in „piles“ you will need to estimate the height of the open stack. For many stacks the angle of repose is 45%. In these cases the height of the stack is the same as half the width of its base allowing calculation of capacity

## 5.3 Safe storage capacity

- 5.3.1 The total amount of combustible waste stored and how it is stored will influence the likelihood, size, duration, and impact of a fire should one occur. As part of your assessment you should calculate the maximum safe volumes of waste you can store:
- 5.3.2 For externally stored wastes see the options for determining stack sizes given in section 6.6 and for internally stored wastes section 7.4. Whether internal or external storage you should calculate the maximum safe storage capacity of your site.
- 5.3.3 If you store various different types of waste you should consider whether you need to include specific storage limits for each type of waste, in particular if a specific waste type poses a higher fire risk.
- 5.3.4 Your calculations must also take account any restrictions on amounts permitted and storage times in your site’s permit/licence or other similar regulatory permissions.
- 5.3.5 Based on your calculations you should be able to determine the maximum safe volumes of waste you can store at any one time, and in any one storage location. You should then compare this maximum volume with your waste inputs and processing capacity. Your management system should then be arranged so as to ensure that waste is transported off site before you reach your maximum safe capacity.
- 5.3.6 If the wastes on your site are subject to seasonal variation in demand and/or supply, it is important that you manage these variations to restrain waste volumes stored on site to within their safe levels. Such seasonal variations should be included in your management system. The same principles apply when variations in off-take markets lead to a build-up of stock levels. Seasonal and/or market factors are not a valid reason for exceeding safe storage capacity.

- 5.3.7 Ultimately your site has a finite safe, storage capacity. You should not exceed this capacity and your site management systems should manage waste inputs and outputs to achieve this end.
- 5.3.8 Note – all of the maximum stack sizes and stack separation distances quoted in this guidance and in its appendices are for „standard“ storage of wastes on the ground: For example, a stack of stored bales of waste on the ground in a storage yard, or an open „pile“ of wastes on the floor in a building. They do not apply to specialised systems such as the sunken waste reception pits of a large waste to energy plant, enclosed silos used to store wood chip or a large drying hall at a mechanical, biological treatment (MBT) plant. For this type of specialised waste storage system competent advice should be sought and it is very likely that enhanced fire suppression systems will be required.

## 5.4 Bunkering/enclosing wastes with firewalls as an alternative to limiting fire spread by distance

- 5.4.1 Reducing the risk of fire spreading from one stack to another is a critical component of any site’s fire management strategy. This can be achieved in two main ways:
- Leaving a physical gap between stacks (often also called a „fire break“) so that fire is less likely to spread between stacks
  - Placing a firewall between stacks to achieve the same end (this is commonly achieved on waste management sites by bunkering/enclosing stacks, such as by using three-sided enclosures).
- 5.4.2 Overall the enclosure/bunkering of wastes may provide improvements both in terms of segregation between combustible wastes and overall storage capacity. For example, providing bunkered storage will mean that the separation distances in the appendices of this guidance will not apply, provided that the walls used are of an appropriate construction, that stored waste height does not exceed wall height and that stored waste does not spill out from the bunker/enclosure. However, there are also potential disadvantages and you must consider these before making a decision.
- Bunker/enclosure size should not exceed the stack sizes given in the appendices to this guidance or those you have arrived at if your storage falls into options 2 or 3 (see sections 6.6 and 7.4 for details of these options). Having firewalls in place does not mean that stack size is not also important

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- For small particle size wastes, such as fines/dusts, and those where self-combustion may be an issue the stack sizes given in appendices 1 and 2 are unlikely to be adequate (see section 5.6 below) and you should determine maximum stack size based on the risks posed
- Consider stock rotation to remove older wastes – bunkers should be cleared to remove old waste from the back of the bunker frequently to reduce the risk of self-combustion
- Temporary wall/side structures for bunkers (such as mobile „A“ concrete frames or blocks, or bales of metal and other non-combustible wastes) need to be considered closely. If there are any gaps between blocks or frames they will be ineffective at stopping fire spread. Permanent walls of a suitable construction are likely to be better at resisting fire spread, although tight blocks may also be effective
- Using combustible materials, such as using bales of paper to enclose loose stored paper, as the walls of a bunker is unlikely to be effective in preventing fire spread – if you choose to use bales to separate wastes then use non-combustible materials such as metals. In addition, achieving a tight and gap-free fit using bales may be difficult and such bunker walls will be less effective than block or permanent bunker walls
- Using steel walls to segregate waste stacks is an option. However, you should consider heat transfer through the steel and in external storage that materials such as steel can heat-up in direct sunlight
- Using railway sleepers in bunker construction is also an option. However, sleepers are combustible (in particular if they have been treated), albeit they will resist fire, but will be less effective than concrete or similar walls
- Whatever construction method is used you will need to ensure that the walls are high and thick enough to stop fire spread from heat radiation. The Society of Fire Engineers Handbook 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (or updates of this), explains how to do this (see further reading and useful links appendix 4 SFPE Handbook)
- You should have in place inspection/checking processes to ensure that wastes do not exceed wall height at any point and that wastes do not spill out from bunkers/bays so defeating any segregation provided to resist fire spread
- Access issues around bunkers should be considered. The ability of the Fire and Rescue Services to fight or contain the fire may be more difficult if access is impeded

**Tip** – when storing wastes in three-sided bunkers why not plan your bunker layout with fire spread in mind? For example, if you have three bunkers in a row, two of which have combustible wastes in and one with non-combustible wastes, then put the non-combustible waste bunker in the middle so separating the two combustible waste bunkers.

**Tip** – for ease of stock rotation, why not have two smaller bunkers rather than one larger? Two smaller bunkers will mean that you can completely empty one bunker while still accepting wastes into the other.

5.4.3 Note – an extreme form of enclosing wastes is to store them in enclosed containers, such as ISO containers or similar. For example, the storage of wastes in containers at a dockside waiting for transport. In these situations stack size will not apply as such containers intrinsically restrict stack size. Likewise separation distances will not apply as such wastes are enclosed on all sides by what is in effect a firewall.

## 5.5 Self-combustion and storage times

5.5.1 Some materials can spontaneously combust under certain conditions, and the risk generally increases when materials are stored for prolonged periods, whether inside or outside, and in general the smaller the particle size the higher the risk.

5.5.2 In general the storage time limits shown below should be used to inform your stock rotation.

Combustible waste type	Maximum storage time on site
Non-shredded or similarly treated wastes (that is wastes whose particle size has not been reduced)	6 months
Baled and compacted wastes (if kept for longer you may wish to break the bales and re-bale to reduce risk)	6 months
Shredded and similarly treated wastes (that is wastes whose particle size has been reduced)	3 months
Combustible fines/dusts and very small particle size wastes	1 month

5.5.3 Note – the above time limits are starting points for your considerations on storage. If you wish to exceed these times you should seek competent advice. In addition, for some wastes the above storage times may be too long and you should consider your waste types carefully for self-combustion. You may also wish to consider whether enhanced fire suppression systems may allow you to extend waste storage times, but you should seek competent advice before making this decision.

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- 5.5.4 If baled wastes seem likely to exceed the above time limits you should consider breaking the bales and re-baling them to reduce fire risk. Likewise, consider turning of stockpiles can reduce the risk (but, see section 6.5 on turning of open stockpiles).
- 5.5.5 You should also communicate with your waste off-takers as appropriate. If a waste is stored at your site for a period of time and is then transported to an off-taker site (or other site), how long will it be stored at the off-taker's site? The risk of self-combustion does not cease if a waste is transported from one location to another.
- 5.5.6 In general on the risks of self-combustion and how you may seek to minimise these:
- You must use a clear recording method to show and record how long all wastes have been on site for
  - You should rotate stock to ensure older wastes are not retained for excessive periods. For example, taking older bales from the rear of a stack before newer bales at the front and emptying storage bunkers to ensure that older waste at the rear of a bunker is exposed and removed
  - Moisture level may be a factor and you may need to monitor this
  - Keep material in its largest form prior to processing for its end market, for example keeping waste wood in bulk storage and only chipping it prior to transport off site
  - Inspect stored wastes frequently (at least once a week as a minimum)

**Tip** – temperature probes and thermal cameras can be used to check on stacks, such as to assess whether hot spots are starting to occur, in particular for older wastes. However, detecting a hot spot is one thing – you must plan in advance what you will do to address any hot spots, such as drenching with water. In addition, equipment such as probes must be used correctly. For example, probing to the centre of a stack to determine temperature rather than just at the surface where temperatures may be lower. A starting point for how often you need to check temperature will be risk assessment, including inputs such as your previous experience and advice from a competent supplier of such equipment or similar.

- 5.5.7 Smaller particle sized wastes may be more prone to self-combustion and there may also be a relationship with density: That is the less dense the waste the more possible an oxidising mechanism and self-heating may occur. If you are storing wastes, such as RDF/SRF and/or smaller particle size wastes in open storage you should consider this – you may need to seek competent specialist advice. Other more specialised wastes may also have self-heating properties which you may need to be aware of and take account of in your controls.

5.5.8 The document Spontaneous Heating of Piled Tyre Shred and Rubber Crumb (Health and Safety Executive – see further reading section) provides further advice on how you can control the risk of spontaneous combustion. Although written for the operators of tyre recovery facilities much of the guidance is applicable to the storage and treatment of other materials that can self combust.

## 5.6 Notes on the use of appendices 1 and 2

5.6.1 Appendices 1 and 2 provide information on stack sizes and separation distances. However, you must consider other factors when using the information in appendices 1 and 2 because the stack sizes and separation distances in appendices 1 and 2 will not be appropriate for all types of waste:

- For dusts, fines and other smaller particle size wastes the stack sizes and separation distances information in appendices 1 and 2 are unlikely to be appropriate. For example, stack size for dusts and fines will be lower than those noted in these appendices because of the higher fire risk typically posed by these types of waste
- For wastes where self-combustion may be an issue the stack sizes and separation distances information in appendices 1 and 2 are unlikely to be appropriate. because of the higher fire risk typically posed by these types of waste

5.6.2 For wastes such as fines of very small particle size wastes which pose a higher fire risk you should consider alternative storage methods rather than using the information in appendices 1 and 2. For example, storing fines in suitable fire-resistant containers or the use of silos with automatic fire suppression and detection systems in place.

5.6.3 You may need to consider factors other than fire when planning storage. For example, for external storage you may need account for wind-blow for some types of waste.

5.6.4 You must also take account of any storage restrictions in your environmental permit/licence/exemption – you must not exceed any such restrictions even if you comply with the stack sizes and separation distances given in appendices 1 and 2.

5.6.5 You should also check for any available sector, technology or waste type specific guidance and regulatory guidance. Such specific guidance may contain stack sizes and separation distances which are different to those in appendices 1 and 2. Where any sizes and distances are more rigorous, you should comply with the sector/waste type/technology type specific or regulatory guidance. However, in the event that such sector/technology/waste type specific guidance is less rigorous than appendices 1 and 2 you should raise this issue with your environmental regulator and/or the authors of this guidance before planning your storage.

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- 5.6.6 However, please note that it is anticipated that some sector specific guidance may give information on how to comply with option 2 (see options for storage 6.6 and 7.4 plus appendices 1 and 2) for specific wastes and technologies. In these cases future revisions of this overall guidance will signpost such appropriate sector specific guidance.
- 5.6.7 Finally, before you read appendices 1 and 2 please note the options explanations given in sections 6.6 and 7.4 of this guidance to ensure that you chose the correct option for your site.





## 6. External waste storage

Typically more wastes are stored outside than inside buildings. This is for various reasons, such as available space and cost compared to internal storage. External storage has advantages and disadvantages, such as:

- Fires may be easier to fight than with internally stored wastes because of likely better visibility and easier access, provided that adequate stack size limits and stack separation distances are in place
- Fire suppression equipment, such as sprinklers, are typically harder to fit, and are likely to be less effective with external storage
- Fire detection equipment may be more difficult to arrange

You should consider the merits of internal and external storage when compiling your storage plan for your site.

### 6.1 Externally stored wastes – overall considerations

6.1.1 One of the major disadvantages of external storage is that, in general, the volumes of waste stored are much higher than internally stored wastes. Some of the largest waste fires experienced have been in external storage yards – some of these fires have burnt for days or even weeks or months and have been extremely difficult to control and extinguish. Many of these fires have been exacerbated by the Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) not being able to access the fire adequately and spread of fire because there has been little in the way of stack separation or physical segregation, such as with fire walls etc.

6.1.2 If you store wastes externally you must consider stack size and separation between stacks. Appendix 1 gives guidance. You should use the guidance in appendix 1 to plan your external storage.

6.1.3 Separation between externally stored wastes and buildings needs to be considered:

- In general open external waste stacks should be separated from buildings by a gap of at least 10 metres, unless the building is protected in a suitable manner (such as a deluge system)
- If the waste is contained in a suitable bunker/enclosure then 10 metres separation may not be required – even then bunkers should not be right against buildings

- 6.1.4 Note – the 10 metres quoted above may not be sufficient for some types of waste and you should consult with your competent advice. Your insurer may also have an input here from the viewpoint of property protection.

## 6.2 Detection and alarm

- 6.2.1 For external storage areas the use of automatic detection systems poses practical problems, although some types of detection system can be fitted externally and you should consider these if practical. Some sites have fitted camera type detectors at external storage stacks and just because your storage is external this does not mean that you should not at least consider detection systems.
- 6.2.2 For external storage you should at least visually inspect stored wastes frequently. Frequency should be determined by your risk assessment, but you should start with no less than once a week and you may want to increase frequency during the summer months, if you have time dependent security/arson issues or other similar higher risk times. As noted above in section 5.5 you may also need to consider the use of temperature probes or thermal imaging.

## 6.3 Fire suppression

- 6.3.1 As for detection, external storage areas pose challenges for fire suppression systems. You should at least consider whether on-site fire hydrants are required and whether you have an adequate water supply with which to fight a fire. You may also wish to consider drench, sprinkler, water mist or other systems for external storage areas as part of your assessment. For example, drench and similar systems can be fitted to external waste storage bunker wall tops.
- 6.3.2 For specialist storage systems the options for fire suppression will depend on the specific situation. For example, a drench system fitted to a silo for storing wood chip, or a foam suppression system at a large MBT plant. For specialist systems you should seek competent advice.

## 6.4 Arson, vandalism and other specific ignition risks

- 6.4.1 Some ignition risks may be lower for external storage. However, others may be higher. In particular the risk of arson/vandalism may be higher. It is often more difficult to protect external areas of a site from trespass than it is for buildings:

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- You should include arson/vandalism risks (for example, the nature of the location your site is in) and security arrangements in your fire assessment for external storage
- If your site has a history of trespass, theft and/or vandalism you should consider enhancing your site security arrangements

6.4.2 Arson/vandalism may not be the only ignition threat externally stored wastes face:

- Are there any specific ignition risks posed by neighbouring premises, such as sparks from welding conducted outside and/or at your site boundary? Consider these and arrange your storage accordingly For example, one known recycling plant is next door to a firework factory which tests fireworks in an external area not far from the recycling plant's boundary – the recycling plant operator only stores wastes at the opposite end of their site to provide as much of a stand-off distance as possible
- There may be other ignition sources external to a site. If you know of any which may be applicable to your site you should include these in your assessments

## 6.5 Turning open stacks

6.5.1 If you use open stacks as storage you should consider whether to turn or not turn your open stacks. Turning will allow excess heat to dissipate and may reduce any local areas of high moisture, but can cause a fire which is already smouldering to flare because it allows oxygen to enter the stack.

6.5.2 Regular turning of open stacks is recommended and it is imperative that site staff understand the appropriate way to manage hot spots – that is what to do if a fire starts. How to detect and manage hotspots must be included in your accident plan/site procedures. Open waste stacks should be monitored frequently for temperature build-up. The longer any stack of materials that can self combust is left the more prone it is to self-combustion and therefore the more closely it should be monitored.

## 6.6 Options for stack size and separation distances

6.6.1 Appendix 1 gives information on stack sizes and separation distances for external storage of wastes. Three options are given for external storage regards stack sizes and separation distances:

- **Option 1** – simple use of the standard stack sizes and separation distances (or firewalls) as noted in table 1 of appendix 1

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- **Option 2** – use of the stack sizes and separation distances given in table 1 of appendix 1 as a starting point, but then modifying these based on additional and/or enhanced fire control measures
  - **Option 3** – a bespoke approach where an operator calculates their own bespoke stack sizes and separation distances using testing and fire science
- 6.6.2 To add clarity to what type of site may fall under options 1, 2 or 3, typical characteristics of sites which may fall into each option are given below:
- 6.6.3 Typical characteristics of a site which is likely to fall into **option 1** are (note all of the below relate solely to the external storage area – for example, a fire detection system in an office at the site or in a treatment building does not count here):
- Only a standard industrial or domestic water supply – that is no on-site hydrant, water main, fire water tank of an adequate volume or other adequate or more than adequate supply leaving the site reliant on water provided by the Fire and Rescue Services
  - No or very basic fire fighting/suppression equipment, such as a site which only has hand-held fire extinguishers or a basic and limited capacity water bowser available, with no drench, sprinkler or similar systems at external storage areas
  - No automatic fire detection system in place at external storage areas – that is fire detection is only provided by visual inspection of stacks
  - No or very basic pollution (firewater etc) features
- 6.6.4 Typical characteristics of a site which may fall into **option 2** may include (note all of the below relate solely to the external storage areas – for example, a sprinkler system in a plant building does not count here):
- Adequate or more than adequate water supply via on-site hydrant/s, fire main, water storage tank of an adequate volume or other adequate or more than adequate supply
  - Enhanced fire suppression systems in place at external storage, such as storage bunker mounted drench, sprinkler and similar systems
  - Automatic fire detection systems in place at external storage areas, such as camera type detectors mounted over external storage bunkers
  - Any other enhanced fire safety strategy and system which has been agreed with, and approved by, the relevant regulatory authorities and local Fire and Rescue Services
  - Appropriate and adequate pollution control features
- 6.6.5 Typical characteristics of a site which may need to use **option 3** may include:

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- Sites with specialised external storage systems such as silos
  - Sites handling unusual or high-risk waste types for which general fire controls may be inadequate
  - Highly complex and very large sites for which bespoke fire controls may be more appropriate
- 6.6.6 You should determine which option your site falls into and discuss this with your regulator before moving to appendix 1 to ensure that you apply the appropriate option to your site.
- 6.6.7 This flexible approach allows operators to decide whether they want to simply accept the guidance standard sizes and distances in table 1 of appendix 1, or whether they want to perform their own analysis. Whichever approach is taken, maximum stack sizes for all stacks and minimum separation distances for open stacks must be in place and part of your storage plan.
- 6.6.8 Note – in all options separation distances do not apply when firewalls (bunkers, enclosures etc) of an adequate construction are used at external storage areas, but maximum stack sizes will still apply.
- 6.6.9 Please also read the general notes on use of appendices 1 and 2 in section 5.6 of this guidance.



## 7. Internal waste storage

In general less waste is stored inside buildings than outside, although this can vary from site-to-site. At many sites internally stored wastes are contained in walled bunkers and similar. However, some waste sites do store baled and other wastes inside buildings open and not contained in bunkers and similar. Internal storage has advantages and disadvantages:

- Fires may be harder to fight than with externally stored wastes because visibility may be impeded by smoke and access for Fire and Rescue Services Vehicles to fight fires may be more difficult
- Fire suppression equipment, such as sprinklers, are typically easier to fit than at external storage areas
- Fire detection equipment may be easier to arrange

### 7.1 Internally stored wastes – overall considerations

- 7.1.1 If you store wastes internally you must consider stack size and separation between stacks. Appendix 2 gives guidance. You should use the guidance in appendix 2 to plan your internal storage.
- 7.1.2 Separation between internally stored wastes and building walls, plant and other equipment within buildings also needs to be considered.
- 7.1.3 Fires in internal storage areas may be more likely to spread to waste processing areas, and damage or loss of buildings and plant is always a risk. As a result, your insurer is likely to place more emphasis on internal storage than external storage fire management. You should seek advice from your insurer to ensure that you have met any requirements they may impose.
- 7.1.4 If you are storing wastes internally in very large quantities, such as in warehousing then you must seek competent advice on the precautions to be taken. These will depend on the type of building used, the types of waste being stored and what fire precautions are already in place.

### 7.2 Detection and alarm

- 7.2.1 For internal storage areas fire detection should be provided (see sections 2.11 and 2.12 for options and general considerations).

- 7.2.2 In addition adequate fire escape provision must be in place and all exit doors from internal storage areas should be provided with manual break-glass points.

## 7.3 Fire suppression

- 7.3.1 For the general options and considerations for fire suppression equipment in internal storage areas see section 2.13 above.
- 7.3.2 At some sites materials are moved from waste treatment/processing directly into internal storage areas using conveyors or other mechanical handling systems. In such cases you will need to consider the potential for fire spread by such interconnection. In such cases you should consider the provision of automatic fire suppression on the conveyors leading to internal storage areas.
- 7.3.3 In some internal storage areas items of recycling/recovery equipment are located in the storage area. For example, a baler located in an internal storage area. In such cases you should consider protection such as listed in section 4 on waste processing.
- 7.3.4 One potential problem with fighting fire in internal storage areas is smoke, which may obscure a fire and make it difficult for the Fire and Rescue Services to direct water direct to the seat of a fire. You may want to consider, subject to your risk assessment, passive or automatic smoke vents in the roof over internal storage areas. However, you must consider this carefully as vents can cause interaction problems with some fire detection and suppression systems resulting in a delay in activation – you should seek competent advice on this issue.
- 7.3.5 You should consider potential operational issues which may affect the effectiveness of any suppression system you have installed. For example, if you have installed a sprinkler or deluge system around an internal storage bunker (in essence, a pipe with nozzles installed on top of or just above your bunker walls). This is unlikely to work effectively if the height you are storing wastes at means such systems are buried. Likewise think about height for other reasons, such as waste piled to such a height that electrical lighting may pose an ignition risk.

## 7.4 Options for stack sizes and separation distances

- 7.4.1 Appendix 2 gives information on stack sizes and separation distances for internal storage of wastes. Three options are given for internal storage regards stack sizes and separation distances:

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- **Option 1** – simple use of the standard stack sizes and separation distances (or firewalls) as noted in table 1 of appendix 2
- **Option 2** – use of the stack sizes and separation distances given in table 1 of appendix 2 as a starting point, but then modifying these based on additional and/or enhanced fire control measures
- **Option 3** – a bespoke approach where an operator calculates their own bespoke stack sizes and separation distances using testing and fire science

7.4.2 To add clarity to what type of site may fall under options 1, 2 or 3, typical characteristics of sites which may fall into each option are given below:

7.4.3 Typical characteristics of a site which is likely to fall into **option 1** may be (note all of the below relate solely to the internal storage areas – for example, a fire detection system in an office or at a treatment area does not count here):

- Only a standard industrial or domestic water supply – that is no dedicated on-site hydrant/s, water main, fire water storage tank of an adequate volume or other adequate or more than adequate water supply leaving the site reliant on water provided by the Fire and Rescue Services
- Very basic fire suppression, such as a site which only has hand-held fire extinguishers and/or fire hoses, with no drench or similar systems at internal storage areas
- Only basic fire detection system in place at internal storage areas not linked to an external 24/7 point of contact through which the alarm can be raised out of work hours
- No or very basic pollution (firewater etc) features

7.4.4 Typical characteristics of a site which may fall into **option 2** are (note all of the below relate solely to the internal storage area – for example, a sprinkler system in another building or at a treatment area do not count here):

- Adequate or more than adequate water supply via on-site hydrant/s, fire main, water storage tank of adequate volume or other adequate or more than adequate supply
- Enhanced fire suppression systems in place at internal storage, such as drench, foam, sprinkler and similar systems
- Automatic fire detection systems in place at internal storage areas linked to an external 24/7 point of contact through which the alarm can be raised out of work hours
- Any other enhanced fire safety strategy and system which has been agreed with, and approved by, the relevant regulatory authorities and local Fire and Rescue Services
- Appropriate pollution control features agreed with your environmental regulator



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7.4.5 Typical characteristics of a site which may need to use **option 3** may include:

- Sites with specialised internal storage systems such as silos
- Sites handling unusual or high-risk waste types for which general fire controls may be inadequate
- Highly complex and very large sites for which bespoke fire controls may be more appropriate

7.4.6 You should determine which option your site falls into before moving to appendix 2 to ensure that you apply the appropriate option to your site.

7.4.7 This flexible approach allows operators to decide whether they want to simply accept the guidance standard sizes and distances in table 1 of appendix 2, or whether they want to perform their own analysis. Whichever approach is taken, maximum stack sizes for all stacks and minimum separation distances for open stacks must be in place and part of your storage plan.

7.4.8 Note – in all options separation distances do not apply when firewalls (bunkers, enclosures etc) of an adequate construction are used at external storage areas, but stack sizes will still apply.

7.4.9 Please also read the general notes on use of appendices 1 and 2 in section 5.6 of this guidance.



## Disclaimer

Nothing in this guidance constitutes legal or other professional advice and no warranty is given nor liability accepted (to the fullest extent permitted under law) for any loss or damage suffered or incurred as a consequence of reliance on this guide. This guidance represents good practice some of which may go further than the minimum you need to do to comply with the law. Regulators may use other regulatory documents and guidance to regulate against – you should satisfy yourself that you comply with such requirements.

The guidance is not a substitute for duty holder judgment and/or professional safety advisor's judgment, Notwithstanding the good practice contained within this guidance, duty holders are responsible for ascertaining the sufficiency and adequacy of their internal and independent procedures for verifying and evaluating their organisation's compliance with health and safety, environmental or other law.

None of the authors or contributors to this guidance accepts any liability (to the fullest extent permitted under law) for any act or omission of any persons using the guidance.

The Waste Industry Safety and Health (WISH) Forum exists to communicate and consult with key stakeholders, including local and national government bodies, equipment manufacturers, trade associations, professional associations and trade unions. The aim of WISH is to identify, devise and promote activities that can improve industry health and safety performance. [www.hse.gov.uk/waste/wish.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/waste/wish.htm).

## Appendix 1: Managing external storage stacks

### Appendix contents

1. Scope and definitions
2. Basic premises used
3. Options for determining external stack size and open stack separation distances
4. Option 1 - standard external stack sizes and stack separation distances
5. Option 2 - modifying distances and sizes given in table 1
6. Option 3 - a calculated method for external stack size and open stack separation distances
7. Layout of external stacks
8. Basic examples of external stack storage layout

This appendix is concerned with maximum allowed stack sizes and minimum separation distances between open stacks for wastes stored externally. This is a complex issue and careful reading of this appendix is recommended. Before using this appendix, please read section 5.6 of this guidance for general information on the use of appendices 1 and 2 and section 6.6 on the options in this appendix.

### 1. Scope and definitions

- 1.1 This appendix is aimed at fire risks. It does not consider issues such as the stability of stacks (except where this may affect fire spread), structural integrity of walls at stack enclosures/bunkers etc.
- 1.2 This appendix is restricted to „standard“ external storage of wastes, such as open stacks of loose, baled or wrapped wastes stored on the ground and/or bunkered/enclosed stacks of wastes (such as wastes in three-sided bunkers/enclosures) and similar. For specialist storage systems such as silos you should seek competent advice.
- 1.3 This appendix only applies to wastes stored externally – that is outside of buildings. For internally stored wastes see section 7 above and appendix 2 below on internal waste storage.
- 1.4 The stack sizes given in table 1 below and those arrived at by calculation apply to both open stacks of waste (such as stacks of baled waste or open stacks of wood etc) **AND** wastes stored externally in bunkers/enclosures such as three-sided bunkers/enclosures.
- 1.5 **BUT**, the separation distances given in table 1 below and those arrived at by calculation **DO NOT** apply to bunkered/enclosed stacks of waste, provided that bunker/enclosure walls are of an adequate construction (such walls replace physical separation distances as a fire shield).

- 1.6 This appendix is not aimed at the temporary storage of wastes in reception for short periods of time typically not exceeding 72 hours or shorter prior to treatment and/or transfer to another site. Rather it covers longer-term storage of wastes. For guidance on waste reception see section 3 above.

## 2. Basic premises used

- 2.1 The information on stack sizes and separation distances given in this appendix are based on two simple and basic premises:
- The greater the size of any stack of stored waste the longer it will burn for, and the greater the risk posed to human health and the environment. It is not acceptable that wastes are stored in such a manner that stacks can burn for days, weeks or even in some cases for months. Accordingly, the first basic premise is that:

***Premise 1: No individual stack of stored waste should be of a size that means it can continue to burn and pose a significant threat to human health or the environment for more than 24 hours***

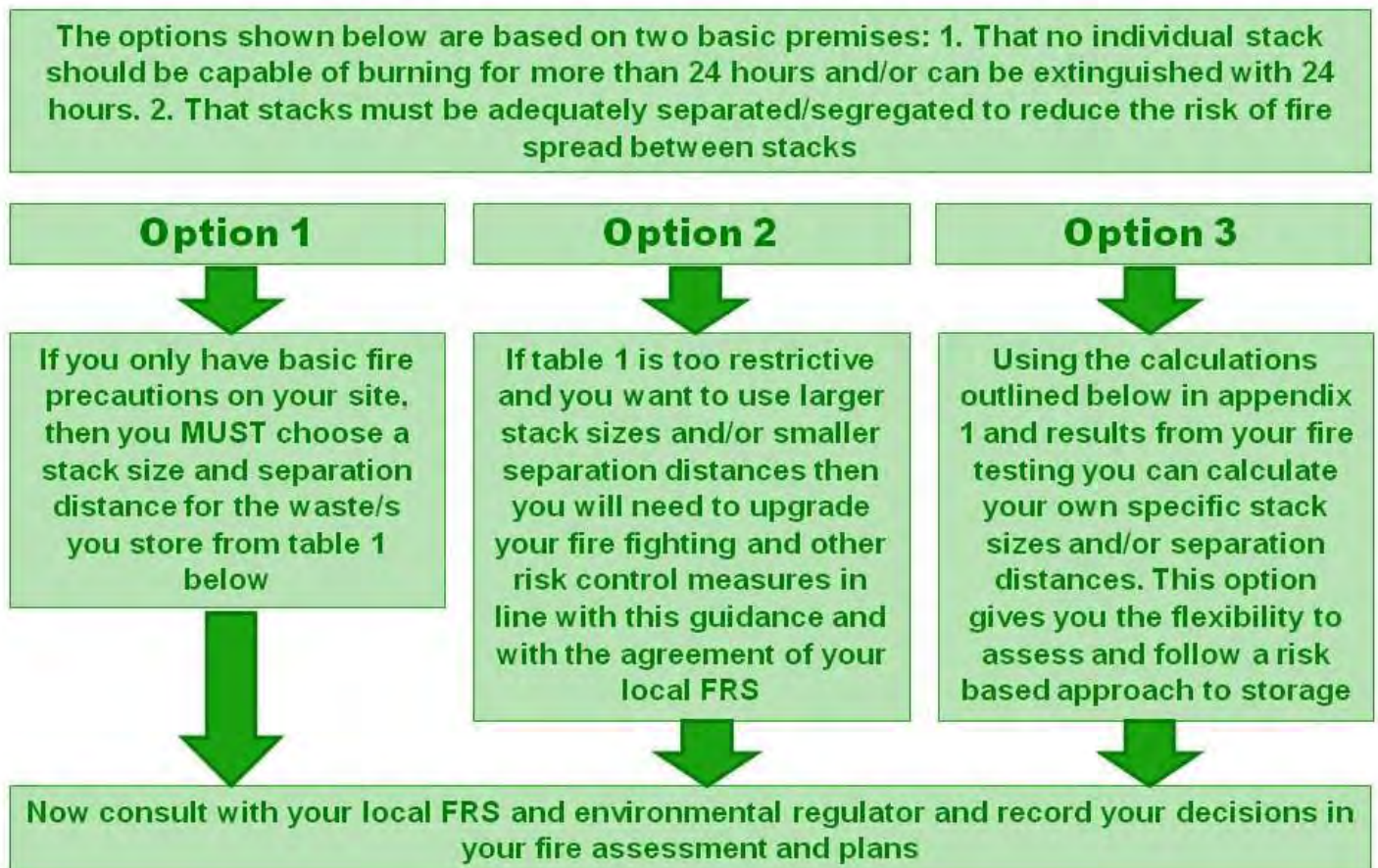
This standard can be achieved either by the stack burning itself out within 24 hours or by being extinguished or controlled to the point at which it represents no significant threat to human health or the environment (typically this is when the Fire and Rescue Services deem the fire is under control and poses no significant threat). For example, for a basic site with only very basic fire fighting systems, such as only a standard water main and hand-held extinguishers, stack size is likely to be related to burn-time. For a site with enhanced fire suppression systems the 24 hours may relate to the time required to bring a fire under control or extinguish it rather than it burning-out (in brief option 2 below). But, you must be able to provide good evidence of your site fire system's ability to fight a fire to the point of control or extinguishment within 24 hours. **Note** – this statement does not mean that fires which burn for less than 24 hours are acceptable. The 24 hours applied here is a back-stop standard and you should make all efforts to prevent fires in the first place.

- If individual open stacks of waste are too close together the risk is that a fire may spread from one stack to another, so extending the duration of the fire and increasing the risks posed to human health and the environment. Accordingly, the second basic premises is that:

***Premise 2: For open stacks not in bunkers or similar that adequate fire break distances between individual stacks must be maintained***

## 3. Options for determining external stack sizes and open stack separation distances

- 3.1 Please ensure you read section 6.6 above on the three options available to operators when deciding on stack sizes and separation distances in external storage. You should ensure you are clear which of the three options your site falls into before reading the below to avoid you imposing more rigorous standards on your site than you need to (or less rigorous than would be appropriate or not in compliance with regulatory standards).
- 3.2 The flow diagram below summarises the approach taken for each of the three options available to operators. Further guidance can be sought from your competent advisor or your local Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). The key aim is to balance the business needs of the site with a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk of fire spread between stacks and the time which would be required for a stack to burn-out or be extinguished.



## 4. Option 1 – standard guidance stack sizes and separation distances

4.1 Table 1 shows standard guidance minimum separation distances between open stacks and maximum stack sizes for individual stacks to minimise the risk of fire spread and ensure any fire does not burn for an excessive period. These stack sizes and separation distances assume that you only have the most basic fire precautions in place at your external storage area (see section 6.6). When using table 1:

- Stack height should be taken as the greatest measurement between the base of the stack and the top. This may not be the highest point if the ground is uneven
- Stack width/length is the maximum width, including for open stacks
- Judging the height of stacks of loose waste, where waste may slump resulting in a „hill“ of waste may be difficult – but, you should measure height to the highest point in such stacks of loose waste

**Table 1: Maximum external stack sizes and minimum open stack separation distances**

Note – the stack sizes and separation distance given in table 1 are based information in the guidance document issued by the Confederation of Fire protection Associations in Europe (CFPA E) CFPA E No. 32:2014 F. This is independent and the most recent information currently available. However, this may change over time as more information on the fire properties of wastes becomes available.

Parameter	Standard	Commentary
<b>1. Parameters for individual stacks of stored waste</b>		
Minimum distance between stacks and buildings	10 m	Unless the building is protected, such as with a drench. Or, if the waste is enclosed in a bunker or similar – even then bunkers should not be directly against buildings and a gap must be left. Note – this standard would include off-site buildings such as at a site boundary
Minimum distance between individual stacks	5 m	Or, provision of an adequate firewall between stacks, such as with bunkered/enclosed waste storage – the walls of such bunkers/enclosures must be to an appropriate standard (see section 5.4.2 of this guidance)
Maximum volume of individual stacks	2000 m <sup>3</sup> for loose waste storage	These maximum stack volumes also apply to bunkered/enclosed storage of wastes
	1600 m <sup>3</sup> for baled waste storage	

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Max height of stacks	5 m for loose waste storage	These maximum stack heights also apply to bunkered/enclosed storage of wastes
	4 m for baled waste storage	
Maximum individual stack width	40m wide if adequate access is available from both sides of the stack	When the above stack volumes and heights are taken into account, this results in a stack of waste 40m wide and 10 m long as a maximum for both loose and baled wastes
	20m wide if access is only available from one side of the stack	When the above stack volumes and heights are taken into account, this results in a stack of waste 20m wide and 20 m long as a maximum for both loose and baled wastes
Max footprint size of individual stacks	400 m <sup>2</sup>	This maximum footprint area is consistent with the above length, width and height requirements

### 2. Parameters for series of individual stacks of stored waste

Max size series of a series of individual stacks	1600 m <sup>2</sup>	In effect, 4 individual stacks 5 metres apart from each other can be arranged as a series of stacks before a wider fire break is required, as specified below. <i>Note – the CFP A E guidance does allow for a larger area of 2000 m<sup>2</sup> if enhanced fire suppression systems are in place at storage</i>
Distance between series of stacks	20 m	Or, a suitable and adequate firewall. For bunkered wastes this 20m distance may not apply, provided bunker walls are adequate (see section 5.4.2 of this guidance). However, some gap between a series of bunkers should be considered for fire fighting access reasons even if a firewall is in place. This 20 m does not always mean that you will have a sterile area of land – non combustible material storage may be practical between series of stacks, provided adequate access for fire fighting is maintained

**Tip** – using the information in table 1 for the types of waste you store, you can create a simple Excel or similar spreadsheet. You can use this spreadsheet to explore different widths, lengths and heights of stack to calculate whether you are within the maximum volumes and areas. Using conditional formatting in Excel to highlight when volume and/or area are exceeded will make management easier.

4.2 Please note that the above stack sizes and separation distances will not apply to all types of waste. You should read section 5.6 of this guidance for exceptions and limitations on the use of the above. In particular for dusts, fines and other similar small particle size wastes the above stack sizes are unlikely to be adequate and smaller storage volumes are likely to be required.

- 4.3 The above data in table 1 is based on the most up-to-date information available. However, the authors and contributors to this guidance are aware that testing on specific waste types is being undertaken and that knowledge on the combustion properties of wastes will improve over time. When any such firm and science based data from testing becomes available it is the intention of the authors of this guidance to revise the guidance to reflect such improved knowledge.

## 5. Option 2 - modifying distances and sizes in table 1

- 5.1 If you have more extensive fire systems in place, such as appropriate and effective drench or sprinkler systems, at your external storage area then you may be able to reduce the separation distances quoted and/or increase stack size. In brief, if you put additional controls in place then the guidance sizes and distances in table 1 may not apply fully to your external storage – but:
- You should seek competent advice on this
  - Your reasons must be based on sound reasoning and fire science and/or proven experience of the adequacy of your enhanced systems. For example, while no one wants a fire if you have suffered a fire and your suppression equipment successfully extinguished it then this may be good evidence that your suppression system is adequate for the volumes of waste you store
  - You must discuss the issue with your environmental regulator and local FRS in advance and be prepared to provide your reasoning for varying from table 1
  - You should not vary from table 1 without gaining the permission of your environmental regulator and your local Fire and rescue Service in advance
- 5.2 Note – it is unlikely that additional fire systems will reduce the separation distances for open stacks given in table 1, unless the additional systems are in the form of water/foam fire curtains or similar. However, additional systems may result in larger stack sizes being appropriate. For example, the CFPA E guidance allows for a larger series of stacks area if enhanced fire suppression systems are fitted at storage (see table 1, part 2) The basic premise of a stack not being able to burn for more than 24 hours will still apply: What you will need to prove is that your provision of additional fire fighting systems means that a fire in a stack could be extinguished in less than 24 hours. You must have good fire science and/or proven experience to support any such argument.
- 5.3 If you intend to use a fire science route to prove that you can vary from the information in table 1 please note that the calculations to prove that additional fire suppression systems would result in a burn-time of less than 24 hours are complex and you are very likely to need specialist advice.



- 5.4 Note – in the future there may be sector specific guidance for specific waste types and technologies which can assist you in deciding how to apply option 2 to your site. The WISH Forum welcomes such guidance and where appropriate when it is made aware of such sector guidance it will seek to include signposting to such documents in future revisions of this overall guidance.

## 6. Option 3 - a calculated method for stack sizes and separation distances

- 6.1 If you decide that you do not wish to use the stack sizes and separation distances in table 1, and that simply varying these based on proven experience/sound reasoning and fire science would not be adequate, a third option is to determine your own bespoke stack sizes and/or separation distances.
- 6.2 This is not a simple option and will require the controlled testing of your wastes to determine their combustion properties and then the use of the results to calculate stack sizes and separation distances. The testing of your wastes will require specialist input. If you do decide to conduct your own testing:
- You are likely to need to have multiple tests conducted on your wastes. Wastes can be highly variable and one test result may not give you sufficient valid information with which to calculate stack sizes and separation distances
  - If you do have multiple tests conducted, do not simply take the best result and use this to calculate stack sizes and separation distances
  - Issues such as density may affect test results. For example, test results for baled waste may not be applicable to a loose waste
  - You are very likely to need competent advice in the interpretation of test results and to perform the calculations required to arrive at stack sizes and separation distances
- 6.3 Note – the methods for calculation and factors to take into account given below use practical experience and fire science as their basis. However, you need to ensure that you account for all factors relating to your wastes if you decide to use a calculated method.
- 6.4 Note – the calculations and methods given below may not be directly applicable to your site if you are using specialist storage systems and/or technologies. However, the principle is the same – if you want to use option 3 you must have good fire science the support your approach.

## Calculating maximum stack size

- 6.5 Different materials burn at different rates and factors such as density will also affect burn rate. For example, a baled waste is likely to burn more slowly than loose waste. Using the principle that no individual stack of waste should burn for more than 24 hours, the below can be used:

$$t_B = M_s / Q_{rate}$$

Where  $t_B$  = burn time,  $M_s$  = the mass of the stack in kg and  $Q_{rate}$  = mass rate of burning.

- 6.6 The rate of mass burning needs to be derived where possible from experimentation – that is burning wastes in controlled conditions to establish its burn rate. As stated above, this burn rate will vary from waste to waste and will be dependent on its density and other factors.
- 6.7 Currently little data is available on burn rates for wastes. It is anticipated that this data will be produced over time as the result of testing by the contributors to this guidance and the wider waste industry. And, that this will allow the production of a wider range of standard maximum stack sizes for different waste types and densities (that is typically baled and loose).
- 6.8 Note – the above calculation assumes that only very basic fire fighting provision is in place. If it can be proved that enhanced fire fighting provision is in place then the above calculation can be modified to reflect this, which may allow for larger stack sizes at sites where good fire fighting provision is in place (see option 2 above).

## Calculating separation distances

- 6.9 From FRS experience of fighting waste fires and fire science, there are three principle methods by which a fire could spread from one waste stack to another:
- Wind-blown or otherwise propelled brands/embers – such as burning fragments of waste being blown from a stack which is on fire to a stack which is not
  - Heat radiation between a stack which is on fire to a stack which is not so causing it to ignite
  - Collapse or partial collapse of a stack which is on fire resulting in burning materials travelling to another stack (or resulting in burning material escaping a site at its boundary)
- 6.10 In addition, for some wastes, such as plastics and oil released from burning rubber, there is the possible method of liquid spread. For example, plastics can melt leading to a „pool“ of molten plastic which can then flow from one stack to another. If you store significant volumes of plastic or similar you may need to take account of this in your calculation of separation distances.

- 6.11 The issue of brands is a high variable and likely best considered in terms of what fire suppression systems are in place, such as sprinkler, drenches, water curtains etc, and the fire-fighting strategy which the FRS adopt to reduce the risk of brands causing fire spread. In brief, while brands are an important factor in fire spread, calculating separation distances based on brands is not practical and there are methods to reduce the risk available to the FRS at a fire.
- 6.12 However, radiation in the form of heat flux can only be tackled by limiting the exposure time, providing a suitable distance between the emitter and the receiver or by providing shielding. As waste stacks are unlikely to be very mobile there is little which can be done with regard to limiting the exposure time and shielding is also likely to be impractical for open stacks once a fire is in progress.
- 6.13 Note – shielding is exactly what an operator is doing if they decide to store their wastes in bunkers, three-sided enclosures etc. The walls of the bunker, provided they are constructed appropriately, act as a fire shield between the bunkered wastes so preventing, or at least limiting, heat transfer.

## Heat radiation

- 6.14 Because of the above, the approach taken in the first part of this section is to concentrate on heat flux and the method of determining stack separation distances to prevent fire spread by heat. The approach taken below is detailed in CIBSE Guide E (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed)<sup>2</sup> paragraph 6.10.2. It cannot be pretended that the calculations involved are easy and you are very likely to need the advice of an external competent person to perform the calculations and give you advice on their use. However, to start:

$$I_r = \phi \epsilon_f \sigma T_f^4$$

Where  $I_r$  = heat flux ( $\text{kW.m}^{-2}$ ),  $\phi$  = configuration factor see SFPE method below,  $\epsilon_f$  = flame emissivity,  $\sigma = 5.67 \times 10^{11} \text{ kW.m}^{-2}.\text{k}^{-4}$  (Stefan- Boltzmann constant) and  $T_f^-$  = flame temperature.

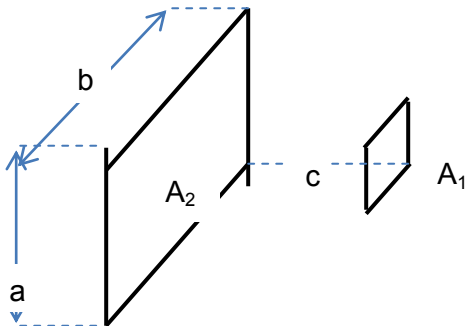
- 6.15 Regarding heat flux, shredded materials and plastics are thermally thin. CIBSE Guide E suggests thin material ignition as being at  $10\text{kW.m}^{-2}$ . Therefore a shredded material parameter of  $7\text{kW.m}^{-2}$  would seem appropriate. Approved document B suggest  $12.6\text{kW.m}^{-2}$  for solid timber products. However both of these parameters assume intervention of the FRS as it is acknowledged that prolonged exposure to these heat fluxes will eventually lead to ignition. The table below gives some parameters for heat flux as a starting point, but for wastes you may need to perform testing to arrive at suitable heat flux data.

Material and FRS response time	Heat flux
Shredded materials with fire service attendance time of 10 mins or less	7 kW.m <sup>-2</sup>
Shredded materials with fire service attendance time of up to 30 mins	4kW.m <sup>-2</sup>
Solid materials with fire service attendance time of 10 mins or less	12.6 kW.m <sup>-2</sup>
Solid materials with fire service attendance time of up to 30 mins	5.04 kW.m <sup>-2</sup>

6.16 By re-arranging the above base equation we get:

$$\phi = \frac{I_r}{\epsilon_f \sigma T_f^4}$$

6.17 This equation will give us the configuration factor. The separation distance can then be derived from the configuration factor equation. The approach taken here is the differential area target equation detailed in the table 1-4.1 page 1-78 SFPE hand book <sup>3</sup>. A<sub>2</sub> and A<sub>1</sub> being the area of the surfaces, „a“ and „b“ being height and length and „c“ distance between the faces.



$$F_{D1-2} = \frac{1}{2\pi} \left[ \frac{a/c}{\sqrt{1 + a/c^2}} \tan^{-1} \left( \frac{b/c}{\sqrt{1 + a/c^2}} \right) + \frac{b/c}{\sqrt{1 + b/c^2}} \tan^{-1} \left( \frac{a/c}{\sqrt{1 + b/c^2}} \right) \right]$$

6.18 The above assumes that emitter and receptor faces are parallel (no angle between faces of the stacks). As such no configuration factor is included in the above. If you use pyramidal stacking, or stacks at an angle to each other, then a configuration factor will be required.

6.19 The main problem is that the height of the emitter is a combination of the height of the stack with the addition of the height of flame above the stack. The approach suggested in CIBSE Guide E <sup>2</sup> (Heskestad equation) is not valid for fires over a large area. There is some discussion on this subject in Drysdale page 118 <sup>4</sup>. There are two options: A percentage height factor, or use the CIBSE equation with a selected pool size of 1 metre.

- 6.20 The justification for this approach is the observation that combustible gases produced by the pyrolysing material can only mix with a fresh oxygen supply vertically. This results in an oxygen controlled fire which is turbulent and fragmented across the large part of the surface area of a large stack fire. However, at the edges of the stack flames have access to fresh air on at least one horizontal plane, in addition to vertical mixing. This is therefore approaching the Heskestad conditions. This approach is still related to the specific material but obviously will over-estimate the flame height resulting in a conservative emitter area for the configuration factor equation.

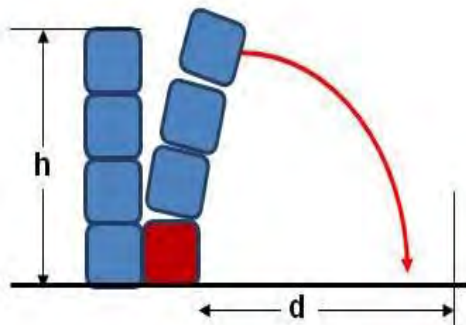
$$\text{Flame height: } Z_f = 0.235 Q^{2/5} - 1.02d_s$$

Where  $Z_f$  = flame height,  $Q$  = heat output of fire and  $d_s$  = diameter of the fire.

- 6.21 The above considers distances between stacks to reduce the risk of heat radiation causing a fire to spread. Another consideration is separation distance between stacks and site boundary. The relevance of this may depend on location: If a site is isolated with no neighbours then this may not be that relevant. If a site is in a residential area emergency services may have difficulties keeping people away from the boundary, or there may be properties at the boundary.
- 6.22 To calculate such a distance a heat flux parameter to use could be less than  $1000 \text{ (kw/m}^2\text{)}^{4/3}\text{s}$  "Hockey, S.M. & Rew, P.J. (1996), 'Review of Human Response to Thermal Radiation'<sup>5</sup>, as the boundary condition for radiated heat.

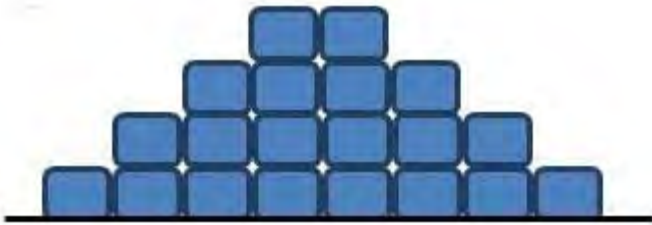
### Stack collapse

- 6.23 Another factor is stability. There are various mechanisms by which stacks could collapse, but to take the obvious one of a stack where material burns to the extent that it becomes unstable:



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- 6.24 Assuming that the top bale will not roll significantly then a reasonable separation distance ( $d$ ) would be at least 1 metre more than the height of the stack ( $h$ ), given that the bale will split on impact with the ground. However, if the waste involved has significant elastic properties (such as tyres), there is the additional issue of the bale potentially bouncing.
- 6.25 Therefore the kinetic energy at „h“ =  $\frac{1}{2} IW^2$ . Where  $IW$  is angular Momentum,  $I = MR^2$ ,  $W$ = angular velocity,  $M$  = mass and  $R$  = radius.
- 6.26 The material is likely to have a significant co-efficient of potential elastic energy. Therefore the bale will bounce at a reflected angle of impact with energy  $E = \frac{1}{2} k X^2$ , where  $x$  is magnitude of energy release described as a dimension and  $K$  is the constant of elasticity of the material.
- 6.27 Alternatively the stack sides could be stabilised by terracing/pyramid stacking the sides. This can be seen to be more stable as the steps/slope lowers the centre of gravity of the stack.



Pyramid/terraced storage of bales may lessen the risk of a bale falling during a fire resulting in fire spread. However, this method may increase bale footprint relative to volume and may cause operational handling issues

- 6.28 This approach also has the benefit of changing the angle of the available plane of radiated heat resulting in a far more favourable configuration factor when it comes to calculating separation distances, although this approach may pose operational issues when moving materials from stacks.
- 6.29 However, if bales (or loose materials) are rounded this needs to be taken into account. For example, some balers used to bale and wrap waste derived fuels result in tube-shaped bales. These can be stacked in a pyramid shape for stability reasons. If such a stack collapses in a fire bales may roll.



Round/tubular bales and loose materials which may roll should a stack collapse during a fire may result in fire spread – such factors need to be taken into account in your calculations to arrive at separation distances

6.30 As can be seen from the above the calculation of separation distances is a complex affair. Data on virgin raw materials (such as for wood) is available and can be used in the above heat radiation calculations. Data for wastes is less available. It is anticipated that over time additional testing by the contributors to this guidance and the waste management industry will allow the production of wider data which could result in the production of more standard tables for separation distances for various waste types and stack configurations.

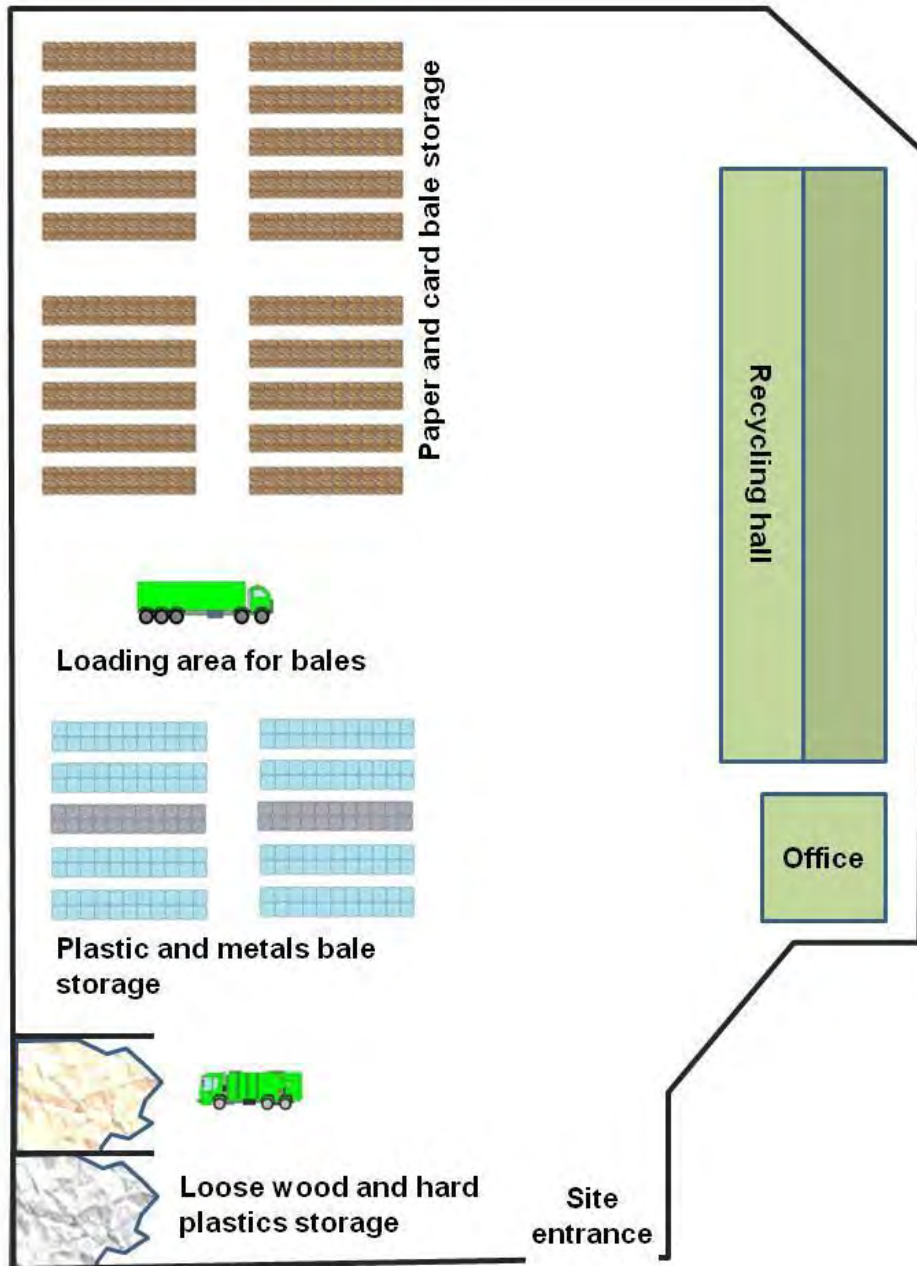
1. *Approved Document B (Fire safety) – Volume 2 - Buildings other than dwelling houses (2006 edition incorporating 2010 and 2013 amendments)*
2. *Boughen D. et al Fire Safety engineering CIBSE Guide E, 2010, CIBSE London*
3. *DiNenno P.J et al editor (2008) "The SFPE Handbook of Fire Protection Engineering 4<sup>th</sup> ed, NFPA, Massachusetts*
4. *Drysdale Dougal ((2000) "An introduction to Fire Dynamics", 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, John Wiley & sons , Chichester*

## 7. Layout of stacks

- 7.1 Once you have identified your maximum stack sizes and the separation distances required between stacks, either by using table 1 or by calculation, and taken account of the access requirement for FRS vehicles, you can start to plan storage at your site. Other factors need to be taken into account, such as but not limited to:
- Location of potential ignition sources
  - Buildings, in particular occupied buildings
  - Location of flammable and/or hazardous substances kept on site, such as gas cylinder cages, diesel tanks, quarantine areas which may contain non-conforming hazardous/special wastes and similar
  - Prevailing wind
  - Where firewater may flow towards, site drainage arrangements and other similar environmental factors
  - Proximity of any neighbouring premises to which a fire might spread or be affected by smoke and heat

**Tip** – use a map of your site with stacks cut out of card or similar to scale and move them around until you achieve the best layout you can. Remember to mark on your map potential ignition sources and locations of hazardous substances etc.

## 8. Basic example of external stack layout



**Example: Material recycling facility producing baled paper, plastics and metals, plus loose hard plastics and wood.**

In this example, the site has two series of stacks: 1. Bales of paper/card with a total footprint of 1,600m<sup>2</sup> (four individual stacks of 400m<sup>2</sup> separated by 5m). 2. Bales of plastic and metals (two individual stacks totalling 800m<sup>2</sup> separated by 5m) and two loose storage bunkers for hard plastics and wood, each with a footprint of 200m<sup>2</sup>). These bunkers have concrete block walls providing protection from fire spread. A 20m firebreak has been left between the two series of stacks. The operator uses this to load out, maximising space.

Storage is well away from the recycling hall and offices. The operator has left gaps between lines of bales in each stack for access and has used metals bales to provide further segregation within the plastic bales stacks.

This example arrangement provides external storage for in excess of 2,000 bales, plus more than 300 tonnes of loose storage.

**Tip** – why not create a simple map, similar to the example shown above, with stack sizes and separation distances marked on it. This can be used to instruct your employees and as a check tool during site inspections to ensure that you are complying with your storage plan.



## Appendix 2: Managing internal storage stacks

### Appendix contents

1. Scope and definitions
2. Basic premises used
3. Options for determining internal stack size and open stack separation distances
4. Option 1 - standard internal stack sizes and stack separation distances
5. Option 2 - modifying distances and sizes given in table 1
6. Option 3 - a calculated method for internal stack size and open stack separation distances
7. Layout of internal stacks

This appendix is concerned with maximum allowed stack sizes and minimum separation distances between open stacks for wastes stored internally. This is a complex issue and careful reading of this appendix is recommended. Before using this appendix, please read section 5.6 of this guidance for general information on the use of appendices 1 and 2 and section 7.4 on the options in this appendix. You should also note the information in section 7 of this guidance.

### 1. Scope and definitions

- 1.1 This appendix is aimed at fire risks. It does not consider issues such as the stability of stacks (except where this may affect fire spread), structural integrity of walls at stack enclosures/bunkers etc.
- 1.2 This appendix is restricted to „standard“ internal storage of wastes, such as open stacks of loose, baled or wrapped wastes stored on the ground and/or bunkered/enclosed stacks of wastes (such as wastes in three-sided bunkers/enclosures) and similar. For specialist storage systems you should seek competent advice.
- 1.3 This appendix only applies to wastes stored internally – that is outside of buildings. For externally stored wastes see section 6 above and appendix 1 on external waste storage.
- 1.4 The stack sizes given in table 1 below and those arrived at by calculation apply to both open stacks of waste (such as stacks of baled waste or open stacks of wood etc) **AND** wastes stored internally in bunkers/enclosures such as three-sided bunkers/enclosures.
- 1.5 **BUT**, the separation distances given in table 1 below and those arrived at by calculation **DO NOT** apply to bunkered/enclosed stacks of waste, provided that bunker/enclosure walls are of an adequate construction (such walls replace physical separation distances as a fire shield).

- 1.6 This appendix is not aimed at the temporary storage of wastes in reception for short periods of time typically not exceeding 72 hours or shorter prior to treatment and/or transfer to another site. Rather it covers longer-term storage of wastes. For guidance on waste reception see section 3 above.
- 1.7 This appendix covers standard type waste management buildings and storage. If you are storing wastes in large volumes, such as in warehousing, then the information in this appendix may not be adequate to your specific situation. You should seek competent advice and you must ensure you comply with requirements such as those in building regulations.

## 2. Basic premises used

- 2.1 For the basic premises used please see section 2 of appendix 1.

## 3. Options for determining internal stack size and open stack separation distances

- 3.1 Please ensure you read section 7.4 above on the three options available to operators when deciding on stack sizes and separation distances in internal storage. You should ensure you are clear which of the three options your site falls into before reading the below to avoid you imposing more rigorous standards on your site than you need to (or less rigorous than would be appropriate).
- 3.2 For other detail of the options please see appendix 1 section 3.2. These basic options also apply to internal storage of wastes, although there are some differences in the characteristics of sites which would typically fall into each option – hence the above advice to read section 7.4 before you read or attempt to apply the information below for each option.

## 4. Option 1 – standard internal stack sizes and stack separation distances

- 4.1 The storage of waste internally is intrinsically linked to the nature, layout and construction of the building wastes are being stored in. You **MUST** consider this when determining stack sizes and separation distances. The information in table 1 below is a starting point – you must also take into account the building you are storing wastes in. For some buildings the stack sizes in table 1 may be too generous and you may need to have smaller stack sizes. Likewise the separation distances may be too low and you may need wider distances dependent on the nature, layout and construction of the building being used.

**Table 1: Maximum internal stack sizes and minimum open stack separation distances**

Note – the stack sizes and separation distance given in table 1 are based information in the guidance document issued by the Confederation of Fire protection Associations in Europe (CFPA E) CFPA E No. 32:2014 F. This is independent and the most recent information currently available. However, this may change over time as more information on the fire properties of wastes becomes available.

Parameter	Standard	Commentary
Maximum floor area (footprint) for internal individual stacks	300 m <sup>2</sup>	No maximum length or width, but overall must be 300 m <sup>2</sup> as a maximum. For example, an individual stack 15 m wide and 20 m long would comply
Maximum height of stacks	5 m for loose storage	These maximum stack heights also apply to bunkered/enclosed storage of wastes
	4 m for baled storage	
Minimum distance between individual stacks	5 m	Or, provision of an adequate firewall between stacks, such as with bunkered/enclosed waste storage – the walls of such bunkers/enclosures must be to an appropriate standard (see section 5.4.2 of this guidance)

- 4.2 Please note that the above stack sizes and separation distances will not apply to all types of waste. You should read section 5.6 of this guidance for exceptions and limitations on the use of the above. In particular for dusts, fines and other similar small particle size wastes the above stack sizes are unlikely to be adequate and smaller storage volumes are likely to be required.
- 4.3 The above data in table 1 is based on the most up-to-date information available. However, the authors and contributors to this guidance are aware that testing on specific waste types is being undertaken and that knowledge on the combustion properties of wastes will improve over time. When any such firm and science based data from testing becomes available it is the intention of the authors of this report to revise this guidance to reflect such improved knowledge.

## 5. Option 2 – modifying distances and sizes given in table 1

- 5.1 The basic principles for modifying the data in table 1 are those outlined in section 5 of appendix 1. Please refer to this section of appendix 1 for detail.
- 5.2 However, you **MUST** take into account the nature, layout and construction of the building you are storing wastes in. See section 4.1 of this appendix.

- 5.3 Note – in the future there may be sector specific guidance for specific waste types and technologies which can assist you in deciding how to apply option 2 to your site. The WISH Forum welcomes such guidance and where appropriate when it is made aware of such sector guidance it will seek to include signposting to such documents in future revisions of this overall guidance.

## 6. Option 3 – a calculated method for internal stack size and open stack separation distances

- 6.1 The basic principles for calculating your own bespoke stack sizes and separation distances are the same as outlined in section 6 of appendix 1. Please refer to this section of appendix for detail.
- 6.2 However, you **MUST** take into account the nature, layout and construction of the building you are storing wastes in. See section 4.1 of this appendix.

## 7. Layout of internal stacks

- 7.1 You should read section 7 of this guidance on internal storage to inform how you may plan the layout of internal stacks. Notwithstanding section 7, issues you need to consider include:
- Consider the possibility of fire spread from an internal stack to plant and equipment and/or processing areas. You should aim to protect plant and equipment either by separation or segregation using firewalls and similar
  - Consider items such as cable trays, power lines and other critical items – could these be damaged by a fire? For example, placing an internal stack directly under a main power cable running across an internal wall or in a cable tray may not be wise
  - Consider where firewater may flow to
  - Do not locate internal stacks, whether open or in bunkers, next to fire escape routes or fire exit doors. A fire in a stack could result in these routes and exits being unavailable

## Appendix 3: Producing an accident/emergency plan

- 1.1 Accident/emergency plans are about how you plan for a disaster, such as a fire, and are aimed reducing its potential effects. All waste management sites should have accident/emergency plans (often aimed at a series of potential disasters, including fire). Some organisations may want to go further than accident/emergency planning into disaster recovery and business continuity planning, but these topics are outside of the scope of this document. Accident/emergency plans are nearly always a requirement of environmental permits/waste management licences.
- 1.2 Although you are responsible for producing the accident/emergency plan for your site, liaison with your local Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) and environmental regulator is recommended as it will assist the FRS and environmental regulator with managing the risk in their area enabling them to respond more effectively should a fire occur.
- 1.3 Your insurer is also likely to be interested in your plan, in particular disaster recovery and business continuity aspects. Consider discussing your emergency plan with your insurer.
- 1.4 The effectiveness of your plan will depend on how well you train your staff. All staff and contractors working on-site must be aware of your plan and what they must do during a fire. You should have regular exercises (drills) to test how well your plan works and that staff understand what to do.
- 1.5 Your plan should be available electronically and in hard copy. Give careful thought to where your plan is located. Employees need to have access, but the FRS also need to have access during an emergency. Many sites place copies of their plan in an „emergency services box“ located at the site entrance or similar so that the FRS can access the plan out of hours in an emergency. In the end, it is no use having a good plan in place if it is in the burning building and cannot be accessed.

**Tip** – an increasing number of Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) vehicles have on-board computers. If you lodge an electronic copy of your emergency plan with your local FRS and they have on-board computers then they will be able to access your plan on the way to your site. Contact your local FRS and ask about this option.

## 2. Content of your plan

- 2.1 The content of accident/emergency plans may differ, but should at the least include:

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- Communication arrangements, such as named emergency contacts, key holders, incident controllers etc with their telephone numbers and likely response time (for out of hours)
- Communications arrangements with neighbours/nearby premises which may be affected
- Hazardous and combustible materials on site, including wastes. To include locations, likely amounts, hazardous properties and other details (locations should also be marked on your site map as below)
- Specific hazards, such as gas cylinders, fuel stores etc – again mark on your site map;
- Normal number of people working on site and usual hours of work
- Fire fighting equipment on site and where this is located, such as location of hydrants, fire extinguishers, hoses, drench systems the Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) can plug-into etc
- Any other equipment on site which may be of use during a fire, such as heavy mobile plant which could be used to assist the FRS
- Any specific environmental issues, such as drainage issues for firewater, protected habitats neighbouring the site etc
- The procedures, such as evacuation, fire fighting and summoning the FRS, which employees and others on site must follow in the event of a fire. This must include the period before the FRS arrives. Outside of the normal procedures, such as how to call the FRS, these procedures should also include
  - Incident controller identification – who will be your main point of contact with the FRS and how are they identified?
  - Procedures to ensure access is clear for FRS vehicles
  - Use of pollution control equipment to block drains and/or divert firewater to a containment area and/or operate any pollution control facilities, such as drain closure valves/or penstocks
  - Processes outside of the normal, such as using soils to cover fires, removing un-burnt materials with mobile plant, re-circulating firewater to reduce run-off etc
  - Processes relating to isolation of utilities connections such as gas and electricity

2.2 If you expect your employees to fight a fire until the FRS arrives then they must be trained to do so and any fire fighting by site employees must not be to the risk of their health and safety.

2.3 As part of your accident/emergency plan you should have a map of your site showing at least:

- Layout of buildings (externally and internally, including fire exits and other access points)
- Any locations where hazardous materials are stored on site (location of gas cylinders, process areas, chemicals, stacks of combustible materials, oil and fuel tanks etc)
- Main access routes for fire engines and any alternative accesses

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- Access points around the site perimeter to assist fire fighting
- Location of hydrants (on and off site) and water supplies, including lagoons, water tanks etc
- Location of fire extinguishers, hoses and other fire fighting equipment on site
- Any watercourse, borehole, or well located within or near the site
- Areas of natural and unmade ground
- Location of plant, protective clothing and pollution control equipment and materials
- Drainage systems, including foul and surface water drains, and their direction of flow and outfall points
- Location of drain covers and any pollution control features such as drain closure valves/penstocks and firewater containment systems
- Location of utilities isolation points, such as for gas, electricity and water

2.4 Your accident/emergency plan should also detail disaster recovery measures as appropriate including:

- The removal of burnt material using appropriate and lawful disposal
- The safe re-commission of plant
- Salvage operations

2.5 Following any fire your accident/emergency plan (and overall fire management measures) should be reviewed and improved as required.

2.6 It is not the intent of this guidance to be the comprehensive guide to accident/emergency planning and you should seek competent advice as to the detail content of your plan. Guidance is also available from various sources, such as the Environment Agency, your local FRS and the Health and Safety Executive.

**Tip** – involve your local FRS in the production of your plan, or at least lodge a copy with them. Inviting your local FRS to your site so that they can familiarise themselves with site access, location of fire fighting equipment, water sources etc and include this in their own plan for the site can also be of benefit – if your local FRS is familiar with your site this could save vital minutes should you have a fire.

## Appendix 4: Checklists

The checklists below are not comprehensive, but they will allow you to make a simple and outline assessment of your fire management. If you have any specific issues relating to your site, you should consider these in addition to the below. In addition, the below may be adequate for a small site, but for larger and more complex sites greater depth is very likely to be required, although the below can be used as baseline to start from. If you answer yes to a question then you may want to add detail in the „comments and actions“ column. If you answer no to any question you should certainly at least note in the „comments and actions“ column why you have answered no, and preferably add actions to remedy the situation.

Issue/consideration	Yes/No	Your comments and actions
<b>Advice and standards</b>		
Do you have access to competent advice on fire management, and if so who?		
Have you consulted with your local Fire and Rescue Services on your site fire management?		
Have you consulted with your environmental regulator on your site fire management?		
Have you consulted with your insurer on your site fire management?		
Do you have access to technical fire management standards, such as BS, EN, building regulations/standards and insurance standards?		
Has the advice of your environmental regulators, FRS, insurer been included in your fire management plans?		
Have any standards set in your environmental permit / licence / exemption been included in your fire management plans?		



<b>Assessments and plans</b>		
Do you have in place a fire risk assessment for your site?		
From this fire risk assessment do you have plans in place to control fire?		
Do these plans include consideration of environmental impacts such as fire water and emissions to air?		
Do these plans take account of the guidance given in this document?		
Do your plans include physical aspects such as fire fighting equipment and procedural aspects such as instructions to employees?		
Do your plans take account of the likely fire fighting strategy your local FRS may take should a fire occur on your site?		
Have you reviewed your plans to take account of your consideration and actions from this checklist?		
Have you included non-waste facilities such as welfare and offices in your plans?		
Have you included fuels and ignition sources outside the scope of this guidance (such as derv tanks and gas cylinder stores) in your plans?		

<b>Whole site considerations – location and neighbours</b>		
Are there any sensitive receptors (transport infrastructure, residential areas, schools, hospitals, water sources etc) which could be affected by a fire at your site?		
If yes, have you considered this in your plans?		
Do any neighbours pose a risk to your site, or could a fire at your site have a catastrophic effect on higher-risk neighbours (such as petrol stations, gas storage facilities, workshops storing fuels etc)?		

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If yes, have you liaised with your neighbours to ensure your and their plans account for this, including communication issues?		
Do you know what the likely response time for your local Fire and Rescue Services will be to attend a fire at your site?		
If your local FRS would be unable to attend your site quickly, have you accounted for this in your plans?		

<b>Whole site considerations – general ignition sources and precautions</b>		
Have your employees been inducted on the fire precautions at your site, including emergency actions and escape?		
Do you include fire precautions in your site rules used with contractors, visitors, third party lorry drivers etc?		
Have you banned smoking on site and/or provided smoking areas away from combustible materials – and do you enforce this?		
Have you included general ignition sources such as lighting, heating etc in your plans?		
Do you conduct appropriate routine testing of electrical equipment (fixed systems and portable – PAT testing)?		
Do you have adequate security arrangements (including out of hours) to reduce the risk of arson/vandalism?		
Have you considered a formal site close-down procedure to detect smoulders which may result in a fire after work has ceased?		
Do you have a housekeeping regime in place aimed at minimising litter, dusts, loose paper/fibre etc		
Do you have appropriate storage for paints, solvents, derv etc?		
Have your employees been trained in the use of fire suppression equipment such as hoses and extinguishers?		
Are the means of escape from buildings and from your site in general adequate – do you have adequate fire escape provision?		

Whole site considerations – heavy mobile plant		
Do you instruct plant operators to clear combustible materials from around exhausts etc at the end of each shift?		
Is your mobile plant equipped with hand-held fire extinguishers?		
Is your mobile plant equipped with automatic and built-in fire extinguishing systems?		
Do you maintain your plant to prevent electrical faults and similar?		
Do you park mobile plant away from waste storage and reception after use?		
Have you considered the role mobile plant can play fighting fires?		
If so, have you trained your employees in the use of mobile plant to fight fires?		
Whole site considerations – hot works (welding, grinding, cutting etc)		
Do you have appropriate controls in place to minimise the fire risks of hot work?		
Do these include the provision of extinguishers and/or hoses at the scene of any hot work?		
Do you conduct a fire watch at least 1 hour after hot works?		
Have you considered a permit to work system for hot works to ensure all required controls are in place during work?		
Whole site considerations – water supplies		
Have you assessed the water supply to your site relative to your potential fire risk – and is it adequate?		
Do you know where the nearest public fire hydrant to your site is – and is this in your emergency plan?		
If the nearest public hydrant is >100 metres away have you considered an on-site hydrant?		

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Have you considered potential alternative water supplies such as lakes, lagoons, rivers etc in your plans? If so, have you consulted with your FRS and environmental regulator?		
If you have sprinkler, deluge etc systems in place have you gained advice to ensure your water supply is adequate to feed them?		
Have you discussed water supplies with your local FRS?		

### Whole site considerations – fire water and fire waste

Do you have a drainage plan for your site which identifies all places water may run to?		
Have you included the potential environmental effects of fire water run-off in your plans?		
Do you need to put in place containment systems to prevent fire water escape?		
Have you considered ways to reduce the amount of fire water which may be produced in the event of a fire and have you consulted with your local FRS on this?		
If there are potential sensitive receptors which fire water may run to from your site have you consulted your environmental regulator?		
Have you considered in your plans how you would dispose of fire water and/or burnt materials which may remain after a fire?		

### Whole site considerations – general fire detection, alarm and suppression systems

Has any detection, alarm, suppression equipment been installed by competent suppliers and to the required technical standards?		
Is all detection, alarm and suppression equipment on your site tested and checked routinely, including by a competent person?		
Have you included in your plans what you do if your detection, alarm, suppression equipment is impaired (such as broken) and any additional measures you will put in place should this occur?		

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Is your fire alarm clearly audible across your entire site?		
Is your fire alarm connected across the site – for example, are your offices connected to the same system as in your processing area?		
Do you review detection, alarm, suppression equipment periodically to ensure no better up-to-date options are available?		

<b>Whole site considerations – non-waste facilities</b>		
Have you included non-waste facilities (offices, welfare facilities, weighbridge cabins etc) in your plans?		
Are waste storage stacks either at least 10 metres from such non-waste facilities, or are they protected in some other manner (such as the waste being in bunkers etc)?		

<b>Whole site considerations – fire appliance access</b>		
Have you assessed your site to ensure that FRS vehicles can access it easily?		
Have you assessed your site to ensure that FRS vehicles can move around your site easily?		
Do these assessments include access widths, weight and heights?		
Are there any obvious issues with access to and around your site, such as overhead power lines, bridges etc?		

<b>Waste reception – hot/hazardous/flammable loads</b>		
Have you included specific issues relating to waste reception and reception areas in your plans?		
Does this include the potential for hot loads and/or hazardous materials in loads which may cause a fire?		
Have you put in place appropriate controls for hot loads etc such as a fire watch at the end of the day, not accepting potentially high risk loads towards the end of the day etc?		

<b>Waste reception – fire detection and suppression</b>		
Have you considered fire detection systems in your reception area/s? If so what did you decide?		
Have you included the options for fire detection listed in this guidance as part of your considerations?		
Have you considered fire suppression systems in your reception area/s? If so what did you decide?		
Have you included the options for fire suppression listed in this guidance as part of your considerations?		
Is your insurer content with your fire detection systems in reception?		
<b>Waste reception – management</b>		
Have you considered the potential for a fire to spread from your reception into other parts of your site/buildings?		
Have you considered the protection of any plant (such as shredders) located direct in your reception area/s?		
Have you considered abnormal situations (such as a breakdown resulting in more waste than usual in reception) in your plan and any additional precautions you will take in such situations?		
Have you determined the maximum safe amount of waste you can have in your reception area/s at any one time and do you have a management system to ensure this is not exceeded?		
Did your consideration of maximum safe amounts in reception include any environmental permit/licence limits?		
<b>Waste treatment/processing – general considerations and detection</b>		
Does your assessment include consideration of general plant/equipment fire risks such as direct heat and electrical and mechanical faults?		

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Do you have an adequate maintenance programme in place to reduce the ignition risk posed by electrical and mechanical faults?		
Do you have a housekeeping regime in place to remove excess dust and loose materials from items such as drive motors and other potential ignition sources?		
Does your fire detection system result in a shut-down of your plant to prevent fire spread – have you considered this issue?		
Have you considered fire detection systems in your processing area/s? If so what did you decide?		
Have you included the options for fire detection listed in this guidance as part of your considerations?		
Have you consulted with your insurer on your fire systems in processing areas and is your insurer content with the standard?		

<b>Waste treatment/processing – specific items of equipment considerations</b>		
Have you considered fitting fire suppression to shredders, bag openers etc which may pose a friction/spark risk of ignition?		
Screens and trommels can provide air to a smoulder resulting in a fire – have you considered fire suppression at screens/trommels?		
Conveyors and other mechanical handling equipment can spread a fire rapidly. Have you considered this in your assessment and have you considered fitting fire suppression at conveyors etc?		
Have you considered slip-sensors on conveyors to detect potential friction issues?		
For de-dusting systems and cyclones etc have you considered dust explosion issues?		
For de-dusting and cyclones etc have you had a DSEAR assessment completed and as required zoned such areas?		
Where de-dusting and cyclone etc have been assessed as being „zoned“ have you put in place appropriate precautions?		

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Have you included other specialised items of equipment, such as optical sorting systems, eddy-current devices etc, in your assessment and provided appropriate precautions?		
Are your mains/electrical plant rooms enclosed and appropriately constructed?		
Have you provided suitable fire detection and fighting equipment in mains/electrical plant rooms?		
Are control panels either in enclosed rooms or suitably protected from dust ingress?		
Have you included the risks posed by hydraulic systems (including fire spread should hydraulic fluid escape) in your assessment?		
Have you considered fire suppression at hydraulic power packs?		
Have you considered gantry level sprinklers or similar at picking cabins above bunkers which may contain combustible wastes?		

### Waste treatment/processing – protection of plant and equipment

Have you considered whether a fire in waste reception or storage could spread to your processing area? If so, what have you done to protect your plant?		
Have you considered whether a fire in waste processing could spread to reception or storage areas? If so what have you done?		
Have you considered a formal plant close-down procedure including running the plant to clear excess wastes, ensuring electrical lock-off is in place and cleaning at the end of the day?		
Have you considered a fire watch at the end of the day to detect any smoulders which may result in a fire?		

### Waste storage(internal and external) - general considerations - capacity

Have you determined what your site's overall maximum safe storage capacity is?		
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Have you split this into safe storage capacities for different wastes, different storage areas etc?		
Have you included issues such as seasonal variations and marketplace variations in your considerations?		
Have you included consideration of any higher-risk wastes in your storage capacity considerations?		
Have you included any environmental permit/licence standards in your storage capacity considerations?		
Have you a management system in place to ensure that you do not exceed your maximum safe storage capacity/ies?		

### Waste storage (internal and external) – detection and suppression

Have you considered fire detection systems in your storage area/s? If so what did you decide?		
Have you included the options for fire detection listed in this guidance as part of your considerations?		
Have you considered fire suppression systems in your storage area/s? If so what did you decide?		
Have you included the options for fire suppression listed in this guidance as part of your considerations?		

### Waste storage (internal and external) – self-combustion and storage times

Have you considered whether the wastes you store may self-heat and pose a self-combustion risk?		
Have you set maximum storage times for wastes which may pose a self-combustion risk?		
Are the maximum storage times you have decided on in line with this guidance?		
Do you have a management system to ensure wastes are not stored longer than maximum, and if they are what action you take?		

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Does this management system include the rotation of stock to ensure that older stock is transported off site before newer stock?		
As appropriate to the wastes you store, does this management system include keeping wastes as larger particle sizes and only shredding and similar shortly before off-take?		
<b>Waste storage – internal storage areas – general considerations</b>		
Do you have an internal storage plan which includes maximum amounts of waste to be stored in any one area?		
Does this plan include maximum stack sizes for open and bunkered/enclosed stacks in line with appendix 1 of this guidance: 1. Following the guidance stack sizes given in table 1 <b>OR</b> 2. Larger than in table 1, but backed by enhanced fire suppression and a valid justification for larger stack sizes <b>OR</b> 3. Bespoke stack sizes from testing and calculation, backed by fire science		
Does this plan conform to the maximum stack sizes for internally stored wastes in this guidance?		
If not, have you produced a justification backed with good reasons (such as enhanced fire fighting provision) to justify larger stack sizes?		
Does your plan include minimum separation distances between individual open stacks of waste (or bunkering of wastes as below)?		
Do these minimum separation distances for open stacks comply with the distance given in this guidance?		
Have you sought advice (such as from your insurer) on the protection of buildings from fires in internally stored waste stacks?		

<b>Waste storage – internal storage areas – bunkered/enclosed storage</b>		
Have you considered the use of bunker/enclosed storage for internally stored wastes?		
If so, are the walls of any bunkers/enclosures effective at preventing the spread of fire?		
Is the construction of your bunker/enclosure walls adequate – solid, no gaps, effective at preventing fire spread		
Do you have management systems in place to ensure that waste height does not exceed bunker/enclosure wall height?		
Do you have management systems in place to ensure that waste does not extend (spill) beyond bunker/enclosure walls so making them ineffective at preventing fire spread?		
Have you considered stock-rotation for bunkered/enclosed internal storage of wastes to ensure older wastes are cleared?		
<b>Waste storage – external storage areas – general considerations</b>		
Do you inspect your external waste stacks routinely to detect degradation and potential fire risks?		
Are externally stored waste stacks at least 10 m from any building?		
If not, is the building protected (such as by a deluge system), or the waste contained in a bunker of similar so providing physical protection of the building from fire spread?		
Have you considered vandalism and arson as a cause of fires in external storage? Are any additional security measures required?		
Have you considered more frequent inspections of externally stored wastes during times of higher risk for vandalism etc, such as holiday periods?		
Have you considered turning of stacks of loose waste?		
Have you considered monitoring of temperature in loose wastes stored externally, such as by using a temperature probe?		

Waste storage – external storage areas – bunkered/enclosed storage		
Have you considered storing wastes externally in bunkers such as three-sided enclosures rather than in open stacks?		
Are walls of bunkers/enclosures effective at preventing fire spread?		
Is the construction of your bunker/enclosure walls adequate – solid, no gaps, effective at preventing fire spread		
Do you have management systems in place to ensure that waste height does not exceed bunker/enclosure wall height?		
Do you have management systems in place to ensure that waste does not extend (spill) beyond bunker/enclosure walls so making them ineffective at preventing fire spread?		
Have you considered stock-rotation for bunkered/enclosed internal storage of wastes to ensure older wastes are cleared?		
Waste storage – external storage areas – stacks sizes and separation distances		
Do you have an external storage plan which includes maximum amounts of waste to be stored in any one area?		
Does this plan include maximum stack sizes for open and bunkered/enclosed stacks in line with appendix 1 of this guidance: 1. Following the guidance stack sizes given in table 1 <b>OR</b> 2. Larger than in table 1, but backed by enhanced fire suppression and a valid justification for larger stack sizes <b>OR</b> 3. Bespoke sizes from testing/calculation, backed by fire science		
If your individual stacks on site exceed the series of stacks requirements in table 1 in appendix 1, have you included a larger separation distance between these groups of stacks?		
Have you considered if you need separation distances between your stacks and site boundary to prevent fire spread beyond site?		
Do you have a management system in place to ensure maximum stack sizes and minimum separation distances are complied with?		

<b>Waste storage – external storage areas – storage layout</b>		
Does your external storage plan include the layout of your storage stacks?		
<p>Does this layout include at least the following factors, as relevant to your site:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Location of potential ignition sources</li> <li>2. Buildings, in particular occupied buildings</li> <li>3. Location of flammable and/or hazardous substances kept on site, such as gas cylinder cages, diesel tanks, quarantine areas which may contain non-conforming hazardous/special wastes and similar</li> <li>4. Prevailing wind, where firewater may flow towards and other environmental factors</li> <li>5. Proximity of neighbouring premises to which a fire might spread</li> </ol>		
Does your layout include adequate access for FRS vehicles?		
Do you have a management system in place to ensure that your layout is complied with?		
<b>Emergency/accident plan</b>		
Do you have an accident/emergency plan for your site which includes fire issues?		
<p>Does your accident/emergency plan include at the least:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communication arrangements, such as named emergency contacts, key holders, incident controllers etc with their telephone numbers and likely response time (for out of hours)?</li> <li>2. Hazardous and combustible materials on site, including wastes, including locations, likely amounts and other details?</li> <li>3. Specific hazards, such as gas cylinders, fuel stores etc?</li> <li>4. Normal number of people working on site and hours of work?</li> </ol>		

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Fire fighting equipment on site and where this is located, such as location of hydrants, fire extinguishers, fire hoses, drench systems the Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) can plug-into etc?</li> <li>6. Any other equipment on site which may be of use during a fire, such as mobile plant which could be used to assist the FRS?</li> <li>7. Any specific environmental issues, such as drainage issues for firewater, protected habitats etc?</li> <li>8. The procedures, such as evacuation, fire fighting and summoning the FRS, which employees and others on site must follow in the event of a fire?</li> <li>9. Action to take in the period before the FRS arrives?</li> <li>10. Incident controller identification – who will be your main point of contact with the FRS and how are they identified?</li> <li>11. Use of pollution control equipment to block drains and/or divert firewater to a containment area and/or operate any pollution control facilities, such as drain closure valves/or penstocks?</li> <li>12. Any fire fighting processes outside of the normal, such as use of soils to cover fires, removing un-burnt materials using heavy mobile plant etc?</li> </ol>		
<p>Does your accident/emergency plan include a map/s of your site?</p>		
<p>Does this map/s include the locations (clearly marked) of at least the following as relevant to your site:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Layout of buildings (externally and internally, including fire exits and other access points)?</li> <li>2. Any locations where hazardous materials are stored on site (location of gas cylinders, process areas, chemicals, stacks of combustible materials, oil and fuel tanks etc)?</li> <li>3. Main access routes for fire engines and alternative accesses?</li> <li>4. Access points around the site perimeter to assist fire fighting?</li> <li>5. Location of hydrants (on and off site) and water supplies, including lakes, lagoons, water tanks etc?</li> </ol>		

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<p>6. Location of fire extinguishers, hoses and other fire fighting equipment on site?</p> <p>7. Any watercourse, borehole, or well located within or near the site?</p> <p>8. Areas of natural and unmade ground?</p> <p>9. Location of plant, protective clothing and pollution control equipment and materials?</p> <p>10. Drainage systems, including foul and surface water drains, and their direction of flow and outfall points?</p> <p>11. Location of drain covers and any pollution control features such as drain closure valves/penstocks and firewater containment systems?</p>		
<p>Is a copy of your accident/emergency plan, including site map/s, kept in an obvious location where the FRS can find it out of hours (such as a secure clearly marked box at the site entrance)?</p>		
<p>Have you lodged a copy of your accident/emergency plan with your local FRS?</p>		
<p>Have you consulted with your local FRS on your accident/emergency plan?</p>		
<p>Do you test your accident/emergency plan (such as fire drills) routinely?</p>		

## Appendix 5: Useful links and further reading

The list below is not comprehensive, but does provide an overview of useful documents you may wish to consider. Other guidance is available – you should ask your competent advisor.

Health and Safety Executive, fire and explosion pages:  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/fireandexplosion/index.htm>

Gov.uk, How to comply with your environmental permit:  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/298102/LIT\\_7123\\_79744e.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/298102/LIT_7123_79744e.pdf)

Environment Agency – Technical Guidance Note 7.01 – Reducing Fire Risk at Sites Storing Combustible Materials: [www.ciwm.co.uk/.../TGN\\_7.01\\_Reducing\\_Waste\\_Fire\\_Risk\\_301013.pdf](http://www.ciwm.co.uk/.../TGN_7.01_Reducing_Waste_Fire_Risk_301013.pdf)

Contact details for your local fire and rescue service: <http://www.fireservice.co.uk/information/ukfrs>

Advice on fire risk assessment for factories and warehouses:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-factories-and-warehouses>

Other guidance on fire risk assessment: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-safety-law-and-guidance-documents-for-business>

WISH (Waste Industry Safety and Health) Forum guidance:  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/waste/information.htm>

Environmental Services Association DSEAR guidance: [http://www.esauk.org/esa\\_reports/index.html](http://www.esauk.org/esa_reports/index.html)

For the full Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005:  
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20051541.htm>

Spontaneous heating of piled tyre shred and rubber crumb – HSE:  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/rubber/spontaneous.htm>. FM (Factory Mutual) technical note 8-3 also includes information on tyre storage fire hazards.

SFPE Handbook 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition - Ch 2 Conduction of heat in solids - National Fire Protection Association – SBN: 0877654514

CIRIA Report C736, 2014 Containment systems for the prevention of pollution:  
[http://www.ciria.org/Resources/Free\\_publications/c736.aspx](http://www.ciria.org/Resources/Free_publications/c736.aspx)

Environmental Protection Handbook for the Fire and Rescue Service:  
<http://www.ukfrs.com/pages/research.aspx>

Also from the Environment Agency other guidance which may be useful: Using Controlled Burn during fires: PPG28: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/pollution-prevention-guidance-ppg>

Technical insurance standards under the FM Global Data Sheets are available as free downloads at: [www.fmglobaldatasheets.com](http://www.fmglobaldatasheets.com)



## Appendix 6: Glossary

<b>Accident/emergency Plan</b>	Part of a written management system that includes an assessment of fire risk on the site and what measures are in place to prevent, detect, suppress, mitigate and contain fire. Note – this is a term used in environmental permits/waste management licences. Other terms, such as emergency plan, fire plan etc, may be used in other regulator aspects. While outside of this guidance, you may also want to consider disaster recovery and business continuity planning
<b>Brands/embers</b>	Small items of material which are on fire, or smouldering which may blow or otherwise travel between stacks and similar and spread fire
<b>Bund</b>	A type of secondary containment. Usually an impermeable construction designed to hold polluting substances that leak, are spilt or run-off from a storage area
<b>Combustible materials</b>	In the context of this document, solid materials that can ignite and burn, such as textiles, wood and paper
<b>Competent advice</b>	<p>Competent advice on fire safety and its technical aspects is critical to good fire control management. Competent advice sources may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-house health and safety specialists – provided that they have sufficient knowledge and experience of fire management and the standards applied</li> <li>• Your local Fire and Rescue Services (FRS). Please note that your local FRS may be best being consulted after you have produced draft management processes, design of site etc</li> <li>• Regulators such as the Environment Agency, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Health and Safety Executive. Please note that while such regulators can provide advice this is not their primary role</li> <li>• Insurers – your insurance company may have internal fire management specialists who you can call on at no or lower cost than going to an external consultant</li> <li>• External consultants – suitably competent external consultants. Please ensure that these are experienced and knowledgeable about fire management and standards</li> </ul> <p>Note – different stakeholders, such as insurers and regulators, may have different priorities and you may need to consult with more than one type competent advice to gain a full picture</p>
<b>Controlled burn</b>	An operational fire fighting strategy where the application of fire fighting media such as water or foam is restricted or avoided, to minimise damage to public health and the environment
<b>Exemption</b>	Low risk waste handling operations that don't require a permit or licence. Most exemptions need to be registered with the EA/SEPA

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<b>Protected habitat</b>	Examples include: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protected Area (SPA), National Nature Reserve, Sites of international conservation importance – Ramsar site, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), National Scenic Area
<b>Hazardous substances</b>	Materials that can harm human health and/or damage the environment
<b>Hazardous/Special Waste</b>	Wastes, specified in the European Waste Catalogue, that may be harmful to human health or the environment
<b>Permit/waste management licence</b>	A document issued by your environmental regulator that controls the environmental impact of your business activities. It has conditions which you must follow to prevent your business harming the environment or human health
<b>Firewater run-off</b>	Water that has been used to fight a fire, likely to be contaminated with the products of combustion and un-burnt materials that are washed off the site
<b>Flammable material</b>	Materials that ignite easily and burn rapidly with a flame. Liquids and articles are usually defined as flammable if they possess a flash point of 60°C or lower
<b>Flashpoint</b>	The lowest temperature at which a liquid produces enough vapour to form an ignitable mixture in air
<b>Foul sewer</b>	Sewers or pipes that collect foul water (sewage and trade effluent) and convey it to a sewage treatment facility. They can be owned privately or by the local sewage treatment provider
<b>Groundwater</b>	Water that is below the surface of the ground in the saturation zone, and in direct contact with the ground or subsoil. The saturation zone is where all the cracks in the rock and all the spaces between the grains of rock and within the soil are filled with water
<b>Penstock/shut-off valve</b>	A sluice or gate valve fitted in a sewer or drain that can be closed automatically or manually to contain spillages or firewater
<b>RDF/SRF</b>	Refuse derived fuel/solid recovered fuel (various types of fuel derived from wastes using various treatment processes)
<b>Secondary containment</b>	A structure such as a bund that surrounds a storage area, designed to contain pollutants in the event of a fire or spillage
<b>Sensitive receptor</b>	Human receptors include hospitals, nursing homes, schools, residential areas, places of work, transport networks. Environmental receptors include source protection zones, surface waters, potable abstractions, groundwater, protected habitats, fisheries
<b>Stack</b>	A pile of solid combustible materials. Any spaces within it will not allow free passage, or exceed one metre in width at their narrowest point

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<b>Surface water drain/sewer</b>	Sewer or pipes that collect uncontaminated surface water only, from buildings, roads and yards, which usually discharges directly into rivers, the sea or groundwater
<b>Spontaneous combustion</b>	Combustion which occurs without an external heat or ignition source being applied
<b>Tertiary Containment</b>	A device or structure such as a firewater lagoon, that provides additional containment should secondary containment fail



## Appendix 7: Cover letters

The below is the text from the two cover letters issued during the original consultation on this guidance (italic text). The first issued in June 2014 and the second in September 2014. This text does not form part of the guidance, but does provide background and context for the guidance:

### First consultation letter 27 June 2014

*27 June 2014.*

*Dear consultee,*

#### **Re: Fire prevention and mitigation guidance for the waste management industry**

*Attached is draft fire guidance for the waste management industry. This has been produced by a cross-industry group including input from the Environment Agency (EA), The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Health and Safety Laboratories, the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) and other bodies. It is endorsed by the EA, HSE, CFOA, ESA and WISH (Waste Industry Safety and Health) Forum. In addition, the main insurance companies involved in waste management have been consulted for their views on some aspects.*

*All comments on this draft should be directed to Stephen Freeland of ESA (Environmental Services Association) at [s-freeland@esauk.org](mailto:s-freeland@esauk.org). If you wish to discuss any aspect of this draft please also contact Stephen who will put you in touch with the appropriate person.*

#### **The deadline for comments is Friday 25 July 2014.**

*When reading and commenting on this draft please keep in mind the below:*

- ✓ *There is an urgent need to issue guidance – our industry keeps suffering serious fires*
- ✓ *The attached draft guidance is good practice based on legal requirements and the experience of regulators, insurers and the industry - your comment is welcome*
- ✓ *We expect most comment to be on stored waste stack sizes and separation distances, in particular for the external storage of wastes (see appendix 1 of the draft). Please note that the data in table 1 of appendix 1 assumes only the most basic fire precautions are in place – sites with more than basic fire precautions may be able to exceed these limits. Please also note the three options included in appendix 1, which give operators flexibility, and that other separation measures, such as storing wastes in three-sided bunkers, are also available to operators – table 1 provides a starting point only*
- ✓ *When writing this guidance we have been aware that there is a range of technical standards and other documents currently available which include various stack sizes and separation distances for stored wastes. However, none of these documents is complete and we have therefore used the best of available information from different sources to arrive at the figures in this draft guidance*

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- ✓ *Key to the sizes and distances included in this draft guidance is that the days of extremely large piles of stored waste with little or no separation between stacks ('mega-stacks') must come to an end – fires in such stacks can burn for unacceptably long periods, are the most difficult to control and pose the greatest risk to the environment, human health and business. Our industry must change, or be condemned to continue to suffer major fires on a frequent basis - this is not acceptable or sustainable and ultimately could result in calls for more, and more rigid, control regulation*
- ✓ *There is little available fire testing or science specific to wastes to provide a firm under-pinning for the available information on stack sizes and separation distances – most of the current information is based on operational and fire fighting experience. There is data on raw materials. Much of this indicates that the separation distances in table 1 in appendix 1 are conservative and separation distances in excess of those currently available for wastes may be required at sites with no fire prevention measures. For example, data on virgin, raw paper and plastics suggests separation distances between 10 - 11 metres and 18 - 27 metres respectively – that is well in excess of those distances quoted in table 1 of appendix 1. Whether this data for raw materials can be applied direct to wastes is not known - real testing on wastes is required*
- ✓ *The contributors to this guidance intend to undertake such testing, but this will take time. Industry input into this testing would be welcome. If you wish to be involved, please indicate this in your reply to this consultation. But, we cannot wait for what is likely to be complex and time-consuming testing and science before issuing guidance - the need is too urgent. Therefore, we have decided to issue this guidance for consultation based on the best current information on stack sizes, separation distances and similar*
- ✓ *Over time as waste specific testing data becomes available we will revise this guidance to keep it up-to-date and to ensure that it remains consistent with the best information available*

We welcome your comments on this draft guidance and our approach.

## **The cross-industry fire work group**

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## **Second consultation letter 1 September 2014**

1 September 2014.

Dear consultee,

### **Re: Fire prevention and mitigation guidance for the waste management industry**

Thank you for your comments on the draft fire prevention and mitigation guidance for the waste management industry which was sent to you for consultation at the end of June 2014. In total 36 organisations replied to the consultation, both from the waste management industry and outside, including the fire and rescue services.

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The cross-industry fire group has now considered comments and will issue a second consultation draft of the guidance. This will be sent to those organisations which replied to the first consultation. For a synopsis of the comments received from the first consultation and the cross-industry work group's response to these please see below. In general, comments from the first consultation fell into four areas:

1. Comments on the structure of the draft guidance, such as reducing repetition, numbering sections for ease of referral, rationalising the structure and other similar matters. The work group has listened to these comments and has revised the draft guidance accordingly.
2. Some comments asked for further clarity on the three options given in the guidance on determining storage stack separation/segregation requirements and storage stack sizes. The work group has listened to these comments and the revised draft guidance includes example characteristics of sites in each of the options, has been restructured and the explanation given of the options enhanced.
3. Various comments of a technical standards nature were received. Where practical these have been included in the revised draft. However, it is not the intent of the guidance to be a technical standards document and revisions to the draft guidance have been made with this principle in mind.
4. Various comments were received relating to the standard separation distances and stack sizes for stored wastes in the draft. In particular some asked why the document issued recently by the Confederation of Fire Protection Associations in Europe (CFPA-E) had not been considered. This document, titled 'Treatment and Storage of Waste and Combustible Secondary Raw Materials' (CFPA-E No. 32 2014 F), was issued in May 2014, during the production of the first draft of the guidance. The cross industry work group was aware of this document at the time. The work group has listened to these comments and has replaced the standard distances and sizes in the first draft with information contained in the CFPA-E document. Please note it is still the intent of the group to conduct real-burn testing on wastes and the data from this may well replace these sizes and distances at a future date.

Fires continue to occur in the waste management industry. There is still an urgent need to issue guidance. The aim is still to issue guidance in October 2014. However because of the comments received on the first draft and the revisions made as a result of these, the work group considers it appropriate for a brief second round of consultation to take place.

We will send out a second draft of the guidance on 1 September 2014. This will be sent to those organisations which responded to the first round. The deadline for final comments is **Monday 15 September 2014**. This date is to allow any revisions to be made in time to release the guidance in October. All comments should be directed to Stephen Freeland of the ESA (Environmental Services Association) at [s-freeland@esauk.org](mailto:s-freeland@esauk.org). If you wish to discuss any aspect of this draft please also contact Stephen who will put you in touch with the appropriate person. We welcome your comments on this second consultation draft guidance.

## **The cross-industry fire work group**