

Regulation of Closed Landfills with Waste Management Licences

We are responsible for all closed landfills with a waste management licence (WML). This briefing note summarises work being carried out to improve the way we regulate these sites.

Background

We created the National Permitting Service Closed Landfill Team in November 2007 to take forward the risk-based regulation of WML Closed Landfills, and to act as a single point of contact for issues relating to these sites.

A WML Closed Landfill is a landfill which is closed for the purposes of annual billing and which remains regulated by a Waste Management Licence. There are about 1500 of these licences in force.

The Closed Landfill Team is working to quality assure the data collected as part of the Regulation 15 project, and to develop a risk-based assessment of WML Closed Landfills both in terms of groundwater and landfill gas emissions.

We are working to prioritise our efforts on the sites where our resources are most needed. We are working closely with representatives from the waste management industry through the Landfill Regulation – Closed Landfill Sub Group and with Defra, and we aim to further develop our working relationships with waste management site operators.

The work being undertaken will be completed in five phases.

Phase 1 – Develop tools

Phase 1 is currently under way. A screening tool will determine the sites where we need additional information in order to assess the potential for environmental impact, both in terms of groundwater and landfill gas emissions. This phase will also identify the sites which have a low potential environmental impact. We will also be undertaking the quality assurance of existing data to ensure we are assessing all WML Closed Landfills and to gather together information relating to landfill gas and greenhouse gas

emissions. Phase 1 will include a period of liaison with industry to test the screening tools and the outcome from this process. Screening will be carried out at all WML Closed Landfills when this liaison is complete.

Phase 2 – Gather data

Phase 2 will focus on sites where additional information is required to accurately assess the potential for environmental impact. Each site will be looked at in more detail to further define what information is required to make the assessment. We will then work with industry to fill the gaps. Where a significant amount of information is required, it may take some time to gather. When the information has been gathered, the site will be put through the screening process again.

Phase 3 – Assess impacts on priority sites

Phase 3 will focus on sites which screening identifies as having a high potential for environmental impact, and will run alongside Phase 2. Assessments will be made on a site by site basis and will determine what steps, if any, need to be undertaken to address the potential impacts. Phase 3 will also seek to identify the sites which have little or no environmental impact and may be suitable for surrender.

Phase 4 – Assess impacts on remaining sites

Phase 4 will focus on gathering information and assessing the remaining sites on the basis of decreasing potential for environmental impact. There will probably be some overlap between Phase 3 and Phase 4.

Phase 5 – Continuing regulation of sites

Phase 5 will see the continuing long term management of WML Closed Landfills. This phase will ensure relevant information is gathered and assessed, and that all relevant measures are put in place, based on a site's potential for environmental impact.

It is anticipated that the scope of some phases of the work may change as we progress through the assessments. We will provide regular updates on progress and any changes to the nature or scope of the work, particularly in light of new or changing legislation. For example, the impending Groundwater Daughter Directive and the regulation of Gas Utilisation Plant on WML Closed Landfills.

Operator contacts

Listed below are nominated single points of contact within the Environment Agency for some of the operators of WML Closed Landfills. We will nominate Environment Agency contacts for additional companies as required.

- Cemex – Katherine Matthews
- Biffa – Bruce Bethune
- WRG – Paul Butler
- Cory – Jordan Gibson
- Lafarge – Michael Bailey
- Veolia – Katherine Matthews
- Sita – Paul Hart
- Viridor – Peter Pearce
- Onyx – Jordan Gibson
- All others and general enquiries – Paul Butler