

Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI)

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Non-Domestic



Factsheet: Waste wood awareness - are you burning the right wood?

Overview

There is a growing concern that treated and untreated waste wood is being mixed and subsequently used for unauthorised end-uses, such as in combustion appliances. This could lead to health and environmental consequences. Due to the seriousness of the concerns, the Environmental Agencies are focusing on illegal activity with waste wood as an urgent priority.

Burning waste wood

Burning waste wood is subject to environmental regulatory controls. If you're using waste wood as fuel, you need to ensure that you hold the correct environmental permit or have registered and are complying in full with an exemption from needing to have a permit. All RHI participants have a duty of care and you must ensure that the fuel you are accepting from your supplier is as described, and the fuel you are burning is appropriate to your installation, i.e. it is of the right quality and type.

If you are using waste you need to ensure it is in accordance with the restrictions set out in any exemptions or permit conditions you hold. Operating a wood burning appliance without an appropriate permit or exemption is an offence. The types of exemptions or permits that may be required are outlined below:

- A waste exemption is available from the relevant environmental agency for burning only clean untreated waste wood in appliances less than 50 kg though put per hour¹.
- Local authority permits are available for burning waste wood from 50kg to 3 tonnes per hour or any amount of treated waste wood up to 3 tonnes per hour.
- Environment Agency, NRW and SEPA permits are available for burning waste wood in units greater than 3 tonnes per hour.

For further information about these controls, please see the websites below. ²

Handling and supplying waste wood

¹ England - [Waste exemption](#), Scotland - [Waste exemption](#), Wales - [Waste Exemption](#)

² England - [Environment Agency](#), Scotland - [Scottish Environment Protection Agency](#), Wales - [Natural Resources Wales](#)

All those who are involved in managing waste in the supply chain also have a duty of care to ensure the waste is managed correctly and that it is only transferred to a person or business who is authorised to take that waste. If you supply wood fuel, derived wholly or partly from waste wood you must:

- Establish if the wood fuel is derived from, or contains any quantity, of waste wood (there is no minimum),
- Ensure that the presence of any amount of treated wood (including Grade A wood) is made clear on the waste description, and
- Ensure the person operating the fuel burning appliance holds the required waste authorisation (they must hold an environmental permit or exemption applicable to the type and amount of waste wood being burnt).

You may be committing an offence if you supply waste wood fuel with an inaccurate description, or to a person who lacks a suitable waste authorisation to burn it.