

When does the waste sector enter the emissions trading scheme?

Emissions from the waste sector activities described above will be included in the emissions trading scheme from 1 January 2011, although full obligations for the surrender of emission units will not start until 2013. Voluntary reporting will be enabled from January 2011 and mandatory reporting is required from January 2012.

How does the waste sector participate in the emissions trading scheme?

Landfill operators will surrender emission units based on a calculation of emissions over a 12-month period. The method to calculate emissions will be set in regulations and is expected to be resolved in partnership with the waste sector over 2009 and 2010. It will build on the discussions and reporting mechanisms developed as a result of the Waste Minimisation Act.

Potential impacts of the emissions trading scheme on the waste sector

The cost of emission units is expected to be passed on to customers of landfills (the people and organisations depositing waste) through increased prices for waste disposal. There is no exact way of generalising a cost increase to all users of landfills, as emissions from individual landfills are noticeably affected by landfill gas collection systems and the incentives and infrastructure for recycling and organic materials diversion. Users of landfills have markedly different items in their waste, which all have different potentials for landfill gas generation. Any price increases will also be affected by competition from other landfills and the management policies and priorities of the landfill owner – usually a local authority.

Will the waste sector receive a free allocation of emission units?

No, the government will not give waste sector participants free emission units. This is because they can pass on the costs of the scheme to their customers, which means the impact of the scheme on the profits of waste sector participants will be limited.

Other government climate change initiatives relevant to the waste sector

The national environmental standard to control greenhouse gas emissions from landfills directly addresses methane emissions from solid waste disposal. This standard required opened landfills with capacities greater than one million tonnes to install and operate landfill gas collection systems from October 2007.



The national waste levy on the disposal of waste and other policies imposed by the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 will indirectly influence greenhouse gas emissions by affecting the quantity and type of waste being finally deposited at landfills.

Also, the New Zealand Waste Strategy contains a range of targets and measures, some of which are directed at organic waste and general waste disposal. Initiatives introduced in response to these targets are likely to influence greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector.

Where to go for more information

For more information on the government's climate change work, including more information about the emissions trading scheme, visit www.climatechange.govt.nz or call 0800 CLIMATE (0800 254 628).

Visit the Ministry for the Environment website at www.mfe.govt.nz for further information on the government's programmes on solid waste, wastewater treatment, and national environmental standards.

Your local council will be able to give you information on waste treatment services and policies in your area.