



The Waste Minimisation Act Information for Retailers

The Waste Minimisation Act (2008) provides a new legislative framework with new tools and responsibilities for solid waste management in New Zealand. This guide provides an overview of your responsibilities under the Act, with quick hyperlink references to the legislation and other useful information.

Responsibilities under the Act

Retailers include those selling products purchased wholesale in New Zealand. If you are importing products for sale in New Zealand your responsibilities may fall under those of a **producer**. Please also read the guide for producers.

The passing of the Act places no immediate new obligations on retailers. However you can expect to be involved in the new waste minimisation initiatives in a number of ways.

Product stewardship

The Waste Minimisation Act provides a framework for **product stewardship** to reduce waste from products. Product stewardship means that producers, brand owners, importers, retailers, consumers and other parties take responsibility for the environmental effects of their products – from ‘cradle-to-grave’.

We expect that many businesses will develop voluntary schemes. These can be formally recognised under Act by being **accredited** by the Minister for the Environment. To be accredited the scheme must meet **criteria** under the Act.

The Minister for the Environment may declare some products to be ‘**priority products**’ and a product stewardship scheme **will be required** for that product. Regulations could then be made **prohibiting the sale of a priority product**, unless it is part of an accredited scheme. Retailers **must comply** with these regulations.

The Minister may also recommend **regulations in relation to products, materials and waste** whether or not they are priority products. These may identify a role for retailers in a particular product stewardship scheme, the details of which would be agreed by the parties to the product stewardship scheme.

The Minister must meet **certain requirements** before recommending any of the regulations outlined above. The Ministry will consult with affected parties before any such regulations are made.

Territorial authority bylaws

Territorial authorities will continue to have responsibility for waste regulation and some disposal of waste in your region. You must adhere to any waste-related **bylaws** made by your territorial authority under the Act.

Records and auditing

Under the Act you could be asked to provide **records and information** to help the Ministry for the Environment monitor waste in New Zealand.

What else can I do?

- **Have your say.** Implementing the Waste Minimisation Act requires the Ministry for the Environment to seek public opinion on a number of matters. Check the **Ministry website** to find out about our latest consultation plans and how you can contribute.
- Support **voluntary product stewardship schemes** by selling products that are part of an accredited product stewardship scheme, and informing consumers about the benefits of purchasing products from an accredited product stewardship scheme.
- Become familiar with the **provisions in the Act for product stewardship**, and local and international examples, so you can be prepared if a product you sell is declared a ‘priority product’.

- Support product stewardship schemes for **priority products** by only selling products from manufacturers/importers that are part of an **accredited** product stewardship scheme.
- If you haven't done so already, you can perform a **waste audit** at your business and investigate alternative uses or destinations (rather than landfill) for your waste. Making these changes may help keep down the costs of waste disposal for your business.

Key dates

- **Public consultation** on a number of Waste Act issues begins in **March 2009**.
- From **1 July 2009** operators of waste disposal facilities will be required to pay a **levy of \$10 per tonne** on waste disposed of at their facility. You may notice an increase in the cost of waste disposal after this date.

More information

- **re:source newsletter** is our bi-monthly e-newsletter, designed to keep stakeholders up-to-date with the latest developments in sustainable business, waste minimisation, and progress being made with the implementation of the new Waste Minimisation Act.
- The Waste Minimisation Act – **Questions and Answers**.
- The Ministry for the Environment works on a range of waste issues. **This page** is your first stop for information on the Ministry's waste work programmes.
- More information on **product stewardship** is available on the Ministry for the Environment website.