



The Waste Minimisation Act

Information for Households

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.

What does the Waste Minimisation Act mean for me?

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

Product stewardship

The 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’. The Minister for the Environment may declare some products to be ‘**priority products**’ and a product stewardship scheme **will be required** for that product. The Act sets out a procedure for government accreditation of both voluntary and mandatory product stewardship schemes.

Product stewardship is consistent with the ‘polluter pays’ principle by including the costs of a product’s environmental impact into the cost of the product. Without product stewardship, the costs of the environmental impact from a product are borne by society – ratepayers, taxpayers and the environment – rather than by the producer or consumer. The producer may choose to pass the cost on to the consumer to recover their costs.

You can assist new product stewardship initiatives by supporting accredited product stewardship schemes. You can do this by buying products that are part of a **government accredited product stewardship scheme**, and by using the appropriate collection or take-back service for the product stewardship system. By supporting accredited product stewardship schemes you can be assured that responsibility is being taken for the environmental impacts of that product.

Waste levy

To generate revenue to help communities and businesses address waste issues, the Act puts a levy on waste disposed of at landfill. The levy will increase the cost of waste disposal to recognise that disposal imposes costs on the environment, society and the economy.

Landfill operators will have to pay the levy based on the weight of material disposed at landfill, but they may pass this cost on to households and business. We anticipate the cost of waste disposal at municipal landfills to go up as operators pass on the cost of the levy.

Approximately half of the levy money will be allocated to territorial authorities to spend on implementing their waste management and minimisation plans. The remaining levy money (minus administration costs) will be allocated, through a fund, to waste minimisation projects (the Waste Minimisation Fund). Find out about the waste minimisation projects we fund by keeping an eye out for information in the media and updates once funding decisions are made.

If you haven’t done so already, you can **perform a rubbish audit** on your household rubbish and investigate alternative uses or destinations (rather than landfill) for your waste. Making these changes will help keep down the cost of your household waste disposal. Check out www.sustainability.govt.nz/rubbish for ideas on how you can reduce, reuse and recycle your household rubbish.

Territorial authority bylaws

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

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 our latest consultation plans and how you can contribute.

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

- www.sustainability.govt.nz provides New Zealand households with information and advice on sustainable living.
- *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.

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