

Health & Safety

Health & safety is a major consideration in the design and operation of bring sites and the implications should be considered for those that use, service and maintain bring recycling facilities. It is a legal requirement for an authority to carry out risk assessments for the services they provide and to identify measures required to comply with health & safety requirements.

Legislation

The key legislation relevant to the waste and recycling sector – and so to bring banks – is:

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA) – This defines the duties employers have towards employees, contractors and members of the public. In terms of bring sites, it refers to considering and reducing risks for those involved in maintaining, servicing and using sites.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 – This requires employers to carry out risk assessments for the activities they undertake. A risk assessment on a bring site should identify potential hazards and assess and reduce risks from those identified hazards. Risk assessments should be reviewed regularly and updated as appropriate, particularly after service changes such as providing additional containers or relocating existing containers.

Guidance on your local authority's health & safety policy and procedures and how this might apply to bring site management and contract letting should be sought from your authority's health & safety officer.

Issues to consider

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published guidance on the safety at bring recycling sites (WASTE11) which can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/waste/amenitiesites.htm. The main hazards associated with bring sites are summarised below. They include:

- **vehicle movements** associated with those using the sites (i.e. the public) and those managing/servicing the sites (i.e. the local authority, third sector organisations or contractors). Many sites are located on or adjacent to, busy car parks and roads and may not be easily closed off for servicing. This means identifying and taking steps to minimise risks when vehicles are moving on site;



Vehicle movements and bank emptying are two key health & safety considerations for running a bring site

- **mechanical lifting operations**, both in terms of risks to members of the public and operatives whilst hoisting and emptying containers, and collisions with other obstructions (such as parked cars and overhead power lines).
- **slips, trips and falls** as a result of rough or uneven ground, poor lighting, weather conditions, or poor site servicing and site design;
- **manual handling**, related to the distance items need to be carried from the nearest parking and the location of apertures causing excessive reaching and stretching by users; and
- **maintenance of containers** – jagged edges, loose flaps etc can be a risk to anyone using the site. There could also be hazards associated with fly-tipped material, broken glass or the overspill of containers.

A reporting procedure for accidents, including RIDDOR¹ accidents, and near misses, needs to be established and communicated.

Reducing risks

To eliminate and reduce potential risks, there should be an up-to-date risk assessment and established and regularly reviewed safe work practices. Regular monitoring of sites should help identify any gaps in an existing risk assessment. Site operatives should be provided with appropriate training on site procedures and safe work practices.

Measures to eliminate and reduce potential risks include:

Vehicle movements:

- having a dedicated drop off zone; having clearly marked zones for pedestrian access;
- eliminating or reducing the need for cars to reverse;
- providing pedestrian crossings; and
- speed restriction signs.

Container collection/emptying:

- preventing pedestrians from accessing sites when containers are being lifted and emptied;
- ensuring operators are trained in the use of servicing equipment and are aware of each site's constraints;
- adequately considering how containers will be accessed at site design / layout stage;
- ensuring the risk assessment highlights any potential obstructions; and
- scheduling servicing during quieter periods

¹ <http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/>

Slips, trips and falls:

- restricting use/operations to daylight hours or considering site lighting for twilight or dark hours;
- ensuring ground conditions are appropriate, e.g. firm, even, well drained and in good condition;
- removing or clearly marking obstructions;
- ensuring spillages and fly-tipped material are removed as soon as possible; and
- where steps/slopes are present installing handrails, signage, slip-resistant surfaces.

Manual handling:

- providing a dedicated drop-off zone close to containers;
- selecting containers with suitable, well-placed apertures to reduce reaching and stretching;
- keeping access to apertures clear; and
- providing advice to the public to reduce manual handling risks

It is recommended that your authority takes account of the advice provided in the HSE Guidance "*Safety at bring-sites in the waste management and recycling industries*" (WASTE 11) when planning and operating bring sites and conducting risk assessments.

Frequently Asked Questions***Is there a legal time period for reviewing risk assessments?***

There is no legally specified time period for reviewing risk assessments but risk assessments should be live documents. It makes sense to regularly review your protocols and ways of working to ensure your risk assessments stay up to date. If there are any significant changes to your bring sites or bring site operations, you will need to review your risk assessments and at an early stage of planning, consider how the changes might alter the risks on site.

Checklist

- Ensure risk assessments are carried out for each bring site and are up to date – have you changed anything?
- Reduce risks by effective site layout and design.
- Ensure containers are located so as to reduce slips, trips and falls.
- Check whether staff and members of the public are using sites carefully. If near misses are reported this may require a review of procedures.
- Ensure regular servicing of sites to reduce the likelihood of containers reaching capacity and materials spilling on to the ground.
- Consider collection criteria of materials that could potentially be hazardous e.g. batteries.
- Consider suitable container types to reduce health and safety incidents, for instance textile banks that are designed to prevent someone climbing in to retrieve textiles.
- Ensure containers do not block the access/highway and that access to the site is suitable for both members of the public and vehicles servicing the site.