Storage of waste sandbags by Local Authorities at temporary collection sites during the flood recovery period

We will allow the storage of waste sandbags by Local Authorities at designated temporary collection sites without the need for an environmental permit, providing the requirements below are met.

Background

During the recovery phase from major flooding events, Local Authorities may want to set up temporary collection sites in some areas where a large number of bags have been used. These would normally need an Environmental Permit if they are taking discarded sandbags.

However, we believe that the requirement for a permit for these temporary collection sites would be disproportionate to the risks.

Sandbags should either be taken to the collection site by the holder or collected by the Local Authority or by a third party approved by the Local Authority. Transport of waste sandbags from the temporary collection site should be undertaken by a Registered Carrier.

Our approach

We will not pursue an application for an environmental permit for the activity provided that:

- Discarded sandbags are stored in a secure place\(^1\).
- Discarded sandbags contaminated with hazardous substances are segregated and stored either in secure containers or in an area with impermeable pavement and sealed drainage.
- Discarded sandbags are stored for no longer than 3 months at a temporary collection point.
- The activity meets the relevant objectives of the Waste Framework Directive;
  ‘… ensuring that waste management is carried out without endangering human health, without harming the environment and in particular:
  (i) without risk to water, air, soil, plants or animals;
  (ii) without causing a nuisance through noise or odours; and
  (iii) without adversely affecting the countryside or places of special interest.’

1. A place is secure in relation to waste kept in it if -
   (a) all reasonable precautions are taken to ensure that the waste cannot escape from it; and
   (b) members of the public are unable to gain access to the waste

www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Enforcement

In not pursuing an application for a permit, we will not normally take enforcement action unless the activity has caused, or is likely to cause, pollution or harm to health. For a more detailed explanation of this enforcement position, please see our Enforcement and Sanctions statement.

This regulatory position will expire on 31 March 2015.