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LOCAL AUTHORITY GUIDANCE ON THE SAFE REOPENING OF HWRC NETWORKS



INTRODUCTION

Veolia, the UK & Ireland's leading provider of recycling and waste services understands the importance of developing best practice for the re-opening of HWRC networks in the light of COVID-19.

We are following Government and WISH guidance and our policy is to work with our clients to agree the best approach based on local conditions and within agreed safety guidelines.

To be clear this guidance is aimed at maintaining the integrity of the whole waste collection and treatment network, reducing fly tipping and the overloading of kerbside collections.

It is designed to enable visits to HWRCs which are essential to prevent injury, illness or harm to residents who have a problem with storing too much waste or have oils or other hazardous waste at home and for whom these are important facilities.



Following Government Guidance where HWRC provision is ranked as a medium priority, a number of Local Authorities are actively considering reopening their HWRC networks. In partnership with Sheffield City Council, Veolia has continued to operate the Sheffield HWRC network throughout the lockdown and is well-placed to address the main safety and operating issues.

Safety is Veolia's first priority and our position as operators is to agree with our clients in advance clear operating guidelines relating to the operation of HWRCs. We agree with authorities specified minimum staff site numbers (without which HWRCs cannot operate) and maximum vehicles on site at any one time. Additional resources should be placed at the entrance to help manage any traffic waiting to get on to the site, where possible these should be uniformed. It may be possible to secure this support from the Local Authority with consideration given to Traffic or Civil Enforcement Officers.

Essentially safety starts with clear communication via local authority website, press and social media, so the public know the new operating guidelines before they arrive on site.

The messaging is:

- 1 Anyone in self isolation or with COVID-19 symptoms must not visit HWRCs under any circumstances
- 2 The public should only visit sites if it is absolutely necessary e.g. if bulky items stored at home represent a health and safety risk
- 3 They must bring address documentation if the local authority requires it
- 4 The number of vehicles on-site will be restricted and cars should be driver-only.
- 5 Social distancing at 2m will be strictly enforced and operatives cannot assist the public
- 6 Restricted opening hours are in place with no or limited walk-ons



RESTARTING OPERATIONS

At the outset, site layout should be reviewed i.e. which containers/bays are opened and for what waste – Wood / Metal / WEEE / White Goods separate – all others could be potentially mixed/general waste. No reuse shops to be allowed to open and alternate bins would be open to encourage social distancing.

Before the operation restarts, Recycling Assistants need to be inducted in key control measures using risk assessment and manager guidance safety packs with face to face contact to be minimised. Operatives should wear full PPE and additional bodycams where available (including supervisor/gate checks).

Bulky item drop off points should be organised where possible, then use mobile plant to move items. FFP3/PPE/cleaning and disinfectant supplies need to be restocked before opening. FFP3 face masks will continue to be provided for activities where they are already identified in the risk assessment as per normal operations (asbestos contamination etc). It is an individual decision to use a face mask and in these cases FFP1 & FFP2 face masks may be provided for reassurance purposes.

Finally, when sites are reopened consideration should be given to separated opening times to allow for cleaning and staggered break times. If a phased approach to opening is preferred, large sites should open first with staggered opening based on postcode areas for days of the week.



SOCIAL DISTANCING

On arrival operate one car in, one car out or two in, two out where larger sites permit. Queue management needs to show separations using tape/cones/barriers/paint – plus clear directional signage e.g 'Queue Here'.

No help can be given by Recycling Assistants and only one person will be allowed on a gantry at a time. Ideally only one operator should be allocated to use yellow plant on site each day and mobile plant cab windows should be closed at all times. The use of floor markings (tape or similar) or cones around containers should be considered to maintain social distancing.



CLEANING REGIME AND SITE COMPLIANCE

Handrails/contact points need to be cleaned ideally every 30 mins and during a site closure during the day if mid-day closures are agreed. Cleaning stations must be set up on larger sites and personal hand gel kept on the Recycling Assistant throughout the day. Yellow plant cabs must be included in the cleandown at pre-start, during use and post-shift.

In terms of site compliance, franchisees and licensees must be up to date with all Veolia guidance with monthly site checks undertaken as a minimum for every operational site and guidance for keeping sites compliant must be adhered to.

CONCLUSION

Veolia believes the two overriding priorities in relation to the reopening of HWRCs are **SAFETY FIRST** and **CLEAR COMMUNICATION**. Working closely with our local authority partners we believe it is important these safety measures are put in place to ensure the safe reopening of HWRC networks and enable councils to fulfil their obligations to provide places for residents to deposit their household waste at all reasonable times.

