

## New Environment Agency charges for registering waste exemptions in England

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### Overview

As from July 2025, waste exemptions in England are no longer free to register. The Environment Agency (EA) has since released details on how charges for registering waste exemptions will be applied. The charges have been introduced to cover the EAs cost for checking that exemption conditions are followed.

**DISCLAIMER: These changes do not apply to waste exemptions which do not require registration.**

#### What is a waste exemption and when are they needed?

The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 allow for low-risk waste activities to be carried out under a waste exemption and without an environmental permit. Such low-risk waste activities involve storing, treating, using, and disposing of waste.

Some examples of low-risk waste activities are covered in the table below. Please note this is not an exhaustive list, more details are available from the [Government's Waste Exemption Guides](#)

Low-risk Waste Activity	Example Waste Type
Storing waste	oils, plastics, cans, paper and cardboard, glass, protective clothing contaminated by hazardous substances, protective clothing not contaminated by hazardous substances etc.
Treating waste (including preparing, recovering, storing)	Food, wood, aerosol cans, glass, paper and cardboard packing, plastic etc.
Using waste	Concrete, bricks, non-hazardous track ballast, aggregates, plant tissue etc.
Disposing waste	Dredging spoil (except spoil in waste code 17 05 05), untreated wood etc

#### What are the charges?

Registering a waste exemption will be subject to the following charges:

- £56 Registration charge - Applicable each time an exemption is registered on a site.
- £30 - £1,236 Compliance charge - Applicable for each exemption depending on which band the exemption falls under:

Upper band – £1,236 (this band applies to T8, T9 and U16 exemptions only)

- Band 1 – £420
- Band 2 – £212
- Band 3 – £30

All exemptions are exempt for VAT.

#### Full and discounted charges

Discounts are available if more than one exemption is registered in bands 1, 2 and the upper band. Discounts apply for every additional exemption. For example, if registering one upper and one band 2 exemption, a discount will only be applied to the band 2 exemption as shown in the table below.

Band	Full Charge	Discounted Charge
Upper	£1,236	£227
1	£420	£76
2	£212	£76
3	£30	No Discount

#### Registering exemptions for a linear network

Where a waste activity using an exemption operates between two grid reference points (e.g. start point A and end point B), these are defined as operational areas. An exemption would need to be registered for each operational area. The above discount conditions apply for any. Where there are multiple operational areas requiring exemptions, the £56 registration fee will only be charged once.

#### What do you need to do?

Waste exemptions last for 3 years, so if your current exemption is due to expire and expect to renew, familiarise yourself with the new charges.

If your waste activity is already registered under an exemption, you do not need to take any further action. However, now would be a good time to check that the activity continues to operate in line with the exemption and whether a permit may be needed.

#### What exemptions are available?

The full list of exemptions and their charging bands is available on the Government website under Annex A here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/waste-exemptions-how-to-choose-register-and-pay/waste-exemption-charges>

This link also provides further details on complex and multiple site registrations and guidance on to pay for the charges.

## Discussion points

### How do I find out if I am responsible for a registered exemption?

Details of all registered waste exemptions are publicly available and accessible from [DEFRA's Public Register Online](#).

### Are Scotland and Wales also affected by this change?

No, these changes apply to England only.

### Is Network Rail responsible for exemptions operated by Principal Contractors undertaking activities on our behalf?

Where an exemption is in the name of the Principal Contractor it is their responsibility to take action.

### What is the difference between an exemption and a permit?

Any low-risk waste activity that falls under an exemption must be registered with the regulator. Permits typically involve higher risk activities and tight restrictions.

### How can I apply for a permit?

EA guidance on checking if you need a permit and how to apply for one is available at this link [here](#).

### Where can I find more info?

Please contact your regional/functional environmental/sustainability professional or consents manager for assistance where required.

### What do you need to know?

The information provided in the application of any environmental permit forms part of legally binding documentation.

As such, if applying for a new permit all details must be accurate and up to date. This includes using Network Rail's latest registered address:

Waterloo General Office  
London  
SE1 8SW

Failure to take action can result in organisational fine and/or imprisonment.

### Is Network Rail responsible for exemptions operated by Principal Contractors undertaking activities on our behalf?

Where an exemption is in the name of the Principal Contractor it is their responsibility to take action.

### Do the changes apply to waste exemptions which do not need to be registered?

No, some waste exemptions do not need to be registered. They are called non-waste framework directive (NWFd) exemptions. NWFd exemptions relate to gathering waste and storing it temporarily. Further information on NWFd exemptions is available [here](#).