

WASTE FROM PLACES OF WORSHIP

The Controlled Waste Regulations 2012 introduced disposal charges to some non-domestic household waste producers. In addition, some premises formerly classified as producers of household waste are now identified as producers of commercial waste. However, the Regulations continue to define places of religious worship as household waste producers where no charges may be made. Church halls are defined as a place of worship; and any office used for church administration, clerical work and handling money also falls within this definition.

Nonetheless, churches should be aware that if they undertake a trading or commercial enterprise, waste arising from such an activity would not come under the definition of household waste and would therefore have to be disposed of by a licensed operator. The following caveats also apply:

➤ **Hiring out of Premises**

If a church hires out their premises to another group or body that uses it for a purpose unrelated to religious worship, this qualifies as a commercial activity. Any waste as a result of such use would be regarded as trade waste, for which local authorities can charge to both collect and dispose of.

➤ **Building Waste**

Churches planning a building or renovation project should factor in the cost of private waste collection. The 'building' waste resulting from any project of the sort could be more than the church's 'general' waste over several years.

➤ **Nappy and Sanitary Towel Disposal**

It is contrary to the Regulations to treat used nappies or sanitary towels as general waste, unless in a household setting. In all other scenarios, these must be removed by a licensed operator who will dispose appropriately. Since, however, churches are defined as "household waste producers", they *can* dispose of these items in their general waste. Be that as it may, if a church runs a large mothers and toddlers group, it may be advisable to look into having a commercial nappy disposal bin installed and the associated waste removed by a licensed operator.

We would suggest that any church experiencing problems with their local authority over waste collection should raise the matter with the Environment Agency:

03708 506 506

enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

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