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Standard Rules Permits for Waste Treatment: A Visual Route Map

A guide to understanding and selecting the correct
permitting route for the treatment of waste.

Introduction

The environmental permitting regime requires those undertaking specified waste recycling, treatment or disposal operations to hold an environmental permit. It provides operators with a framework for environmental permits, covering a wide range of activities that release emissions to land, air and water, or that involve waste. A key component is that it allows applicants that would otherwise require several permits on a single site for activities falling under various regulations to complete a single application, and to be issued with one permit.

The environmental permitting regime includes the treatment of waste materials, and with approximately 650 different European Waste Catalogue (EWC) codes assigned to different materials arising from different sectors, the number of potential permit options and routes can seem complex and difficult to navigate.

In this guide, we present a visual route map identifying the correct permit approach for your facility or waste operation. Our guidance is based on the approach adopted by the Environment Agency in England and is correct at the date of publication in August 2021. It should be noted that devolved regions have separate regulatory powers, and whilst Natural Resources Wales, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and Northern Ireland Environment Agency adopt a similar approach, each regulator should be consulted to identify differences in approach to that described in this visual guide.

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What is a Standard Rules permit?

The regulator publishes a set of permits for activities perceived as low to medium risk, which enable applicants to apply for a permit with a lower cost of application and subsequent fees to maintain the permit. Although these permits offer a quicker and simpler route to obtaining consent to operate, they can be limiting. Standard Rules permits have fixed operating conditions that an operator must adhere to and cannot be amended in any way such as adding an EWC code. Furthermore, there is no right of appeal against any conditions set within the permit. The Standard Rules permits include a set of qualifying criteria based on your location and distance to sensitive environmental and human receptors. Details of typical criteria are presented on Page 9.

This guide explores the permitting route for the treatment of waste and covers the Standard Rules permits available for the following waste materials:



Biowaste



Woods



Soils & Aggregates



Metals & WEEE



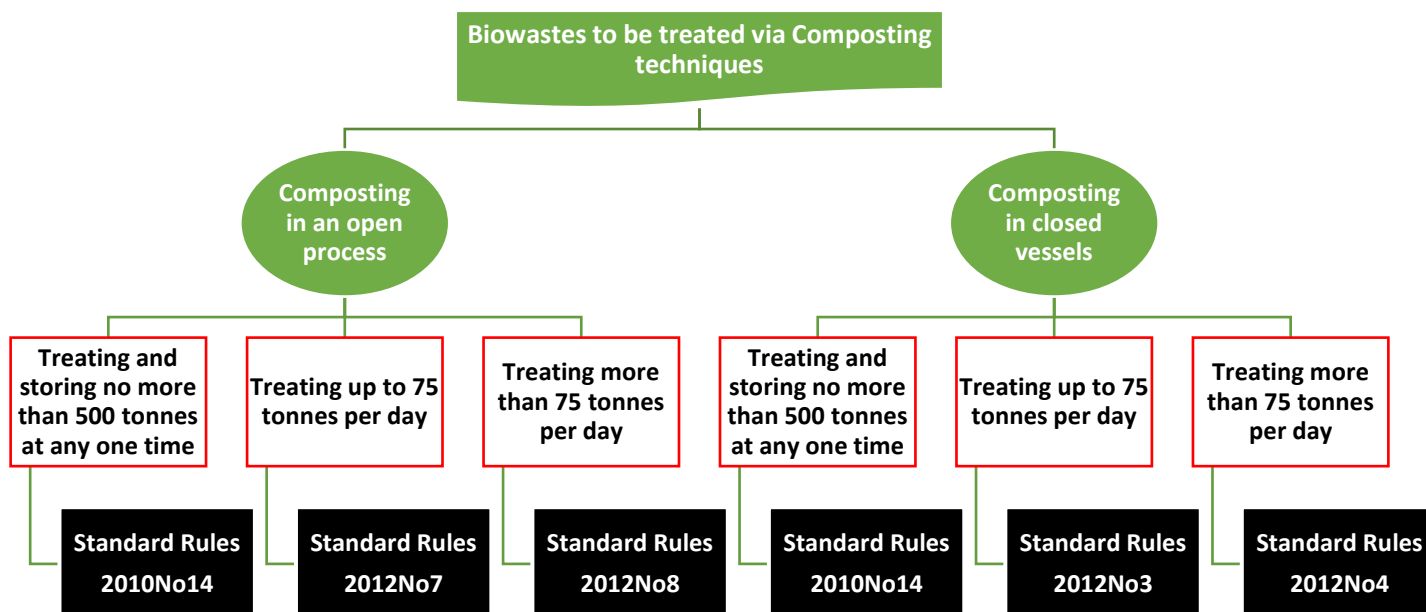
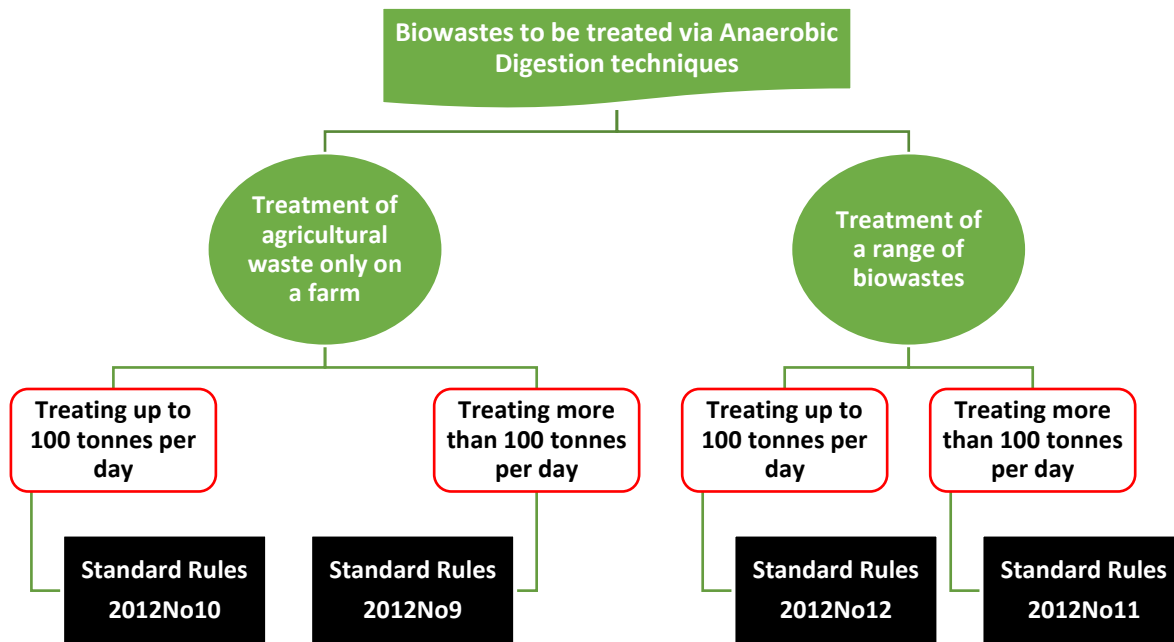
Vehicles



Mixed Wastes

Biowaste Treatment

Biowaste consists of a range of biodegradable materials such as agricultural residues and manures, food wastes from manufacturing, hospitality and retail catering wastes, garden and park waste and municipal kerbside collected separate or co-mingled green wastes. The Standard Rules permits are split into two distinct categories dependent upon the treatment technology being applied.



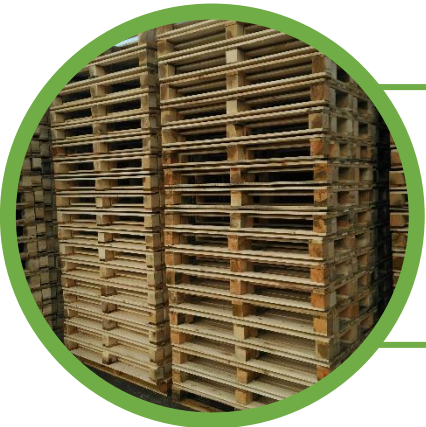
Waste Wood Treatment

Waste wood consists of a range of materials from timber off-cuts sourced from primary manufacturing to construction and demolition waste wood from post-consumer sources. There are two types of Standard Rules permits available for waste woods with a distinction between each permit based upon whether the recovered wood is utilised as part of a construction process on site.



Treatment of waste wood for recovery
<5,000 tonnes per annum

Standard Rules
2015No23



Treatment of waste wood for the
manufacture of timber and/or construction
products <75,000 tonnes per annum

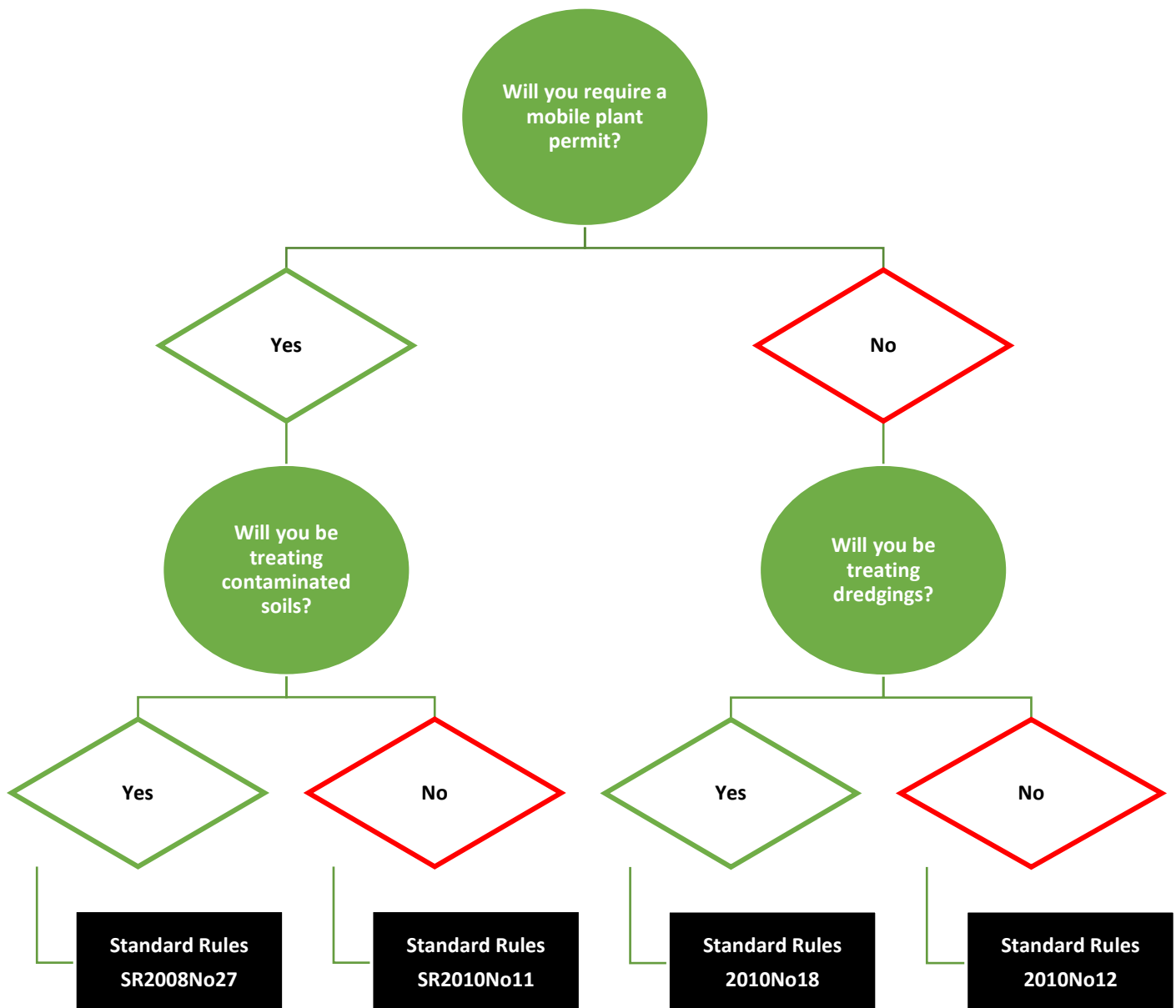
Standard Rules
2015No24

There are several permits for the recovery of waste wood through combustion activities such as recovery in a biomass boiler. We have written a guide to the regulation of such facilities in our Medium Combustion Plant Directive (MCPD) paper which is free to download from the link button below.

MCPD
Download

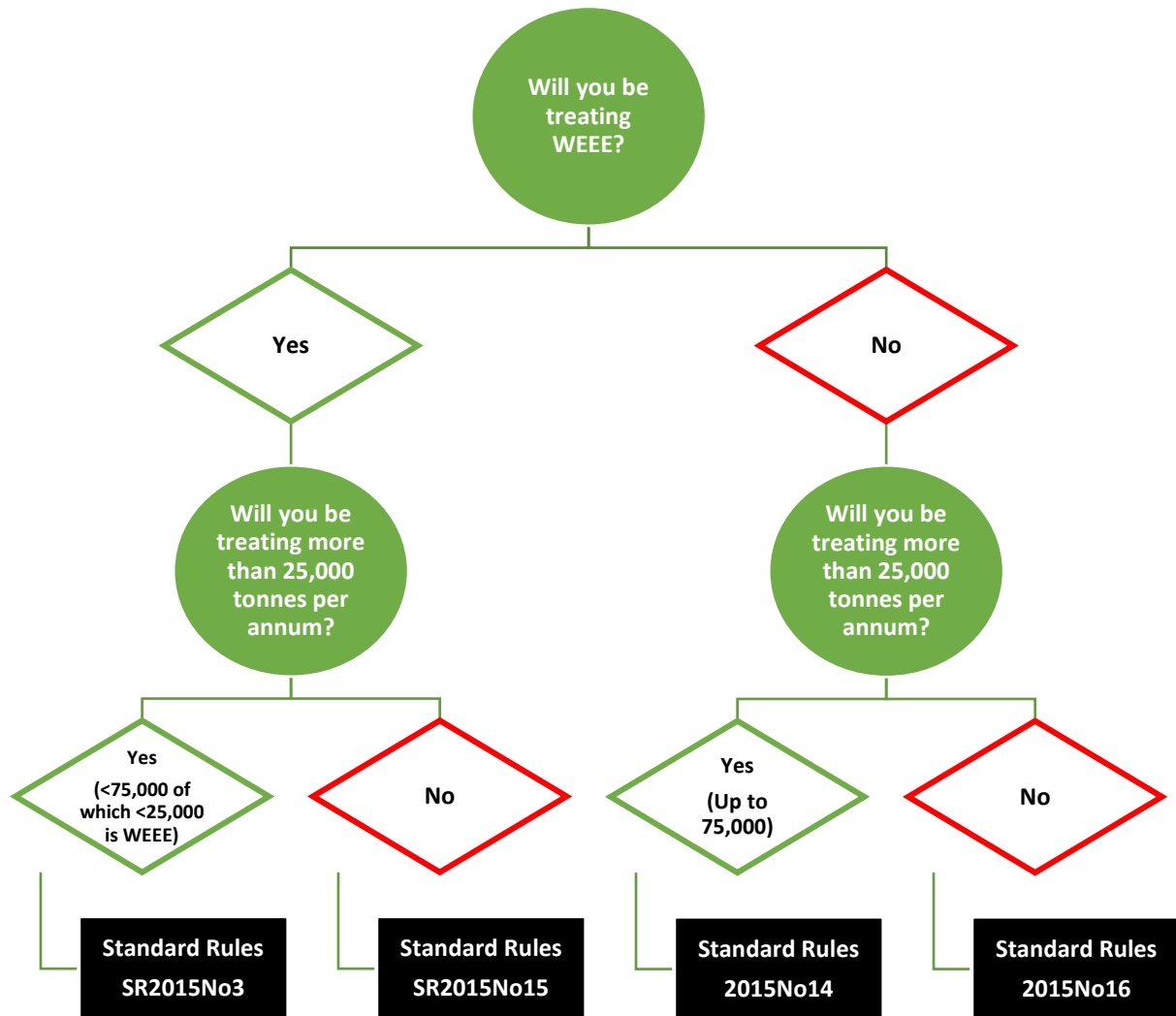
Soils and Aggregates

Soils and aggregates can be recycled utilising a permit for mobile plant or a fixed processing site. The determination of whether mobile plant is appropriate is based on three key determination factors; is it a low environmental impact activity, is the plant designed to move or be moved, and whether the operator plans to temporarily undertake the activity at any one location.



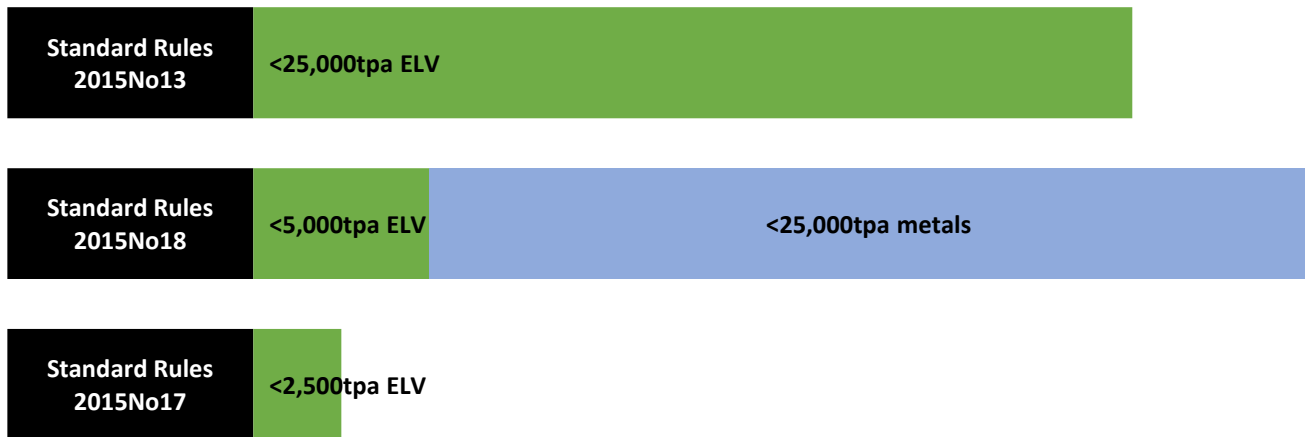
Metals and WEEE

These permits include the recycling of metals and in some cases for the operations of a Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) authorised treatment facility. The permits do not allow the treatment of WEEE containing ozone-depleting substances, but it can be accepted for storage only. The treatment and storage of WEEE must meet the technical requirements of the WEEE Directive (2012/19/EU).

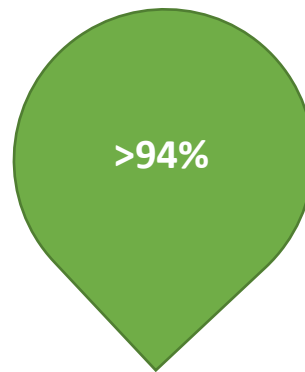


Vehicle Dismantling

These permit rules will allow the operator to operate a Vehicle Depollution and Dismantling Facility for the receipt and treatment of End of Life Vehicles (ELV). Permit options relate to the scale of operations with one Standard Rules permit also permitting the recycling of metals in addition to ELV depollution and dismantling.



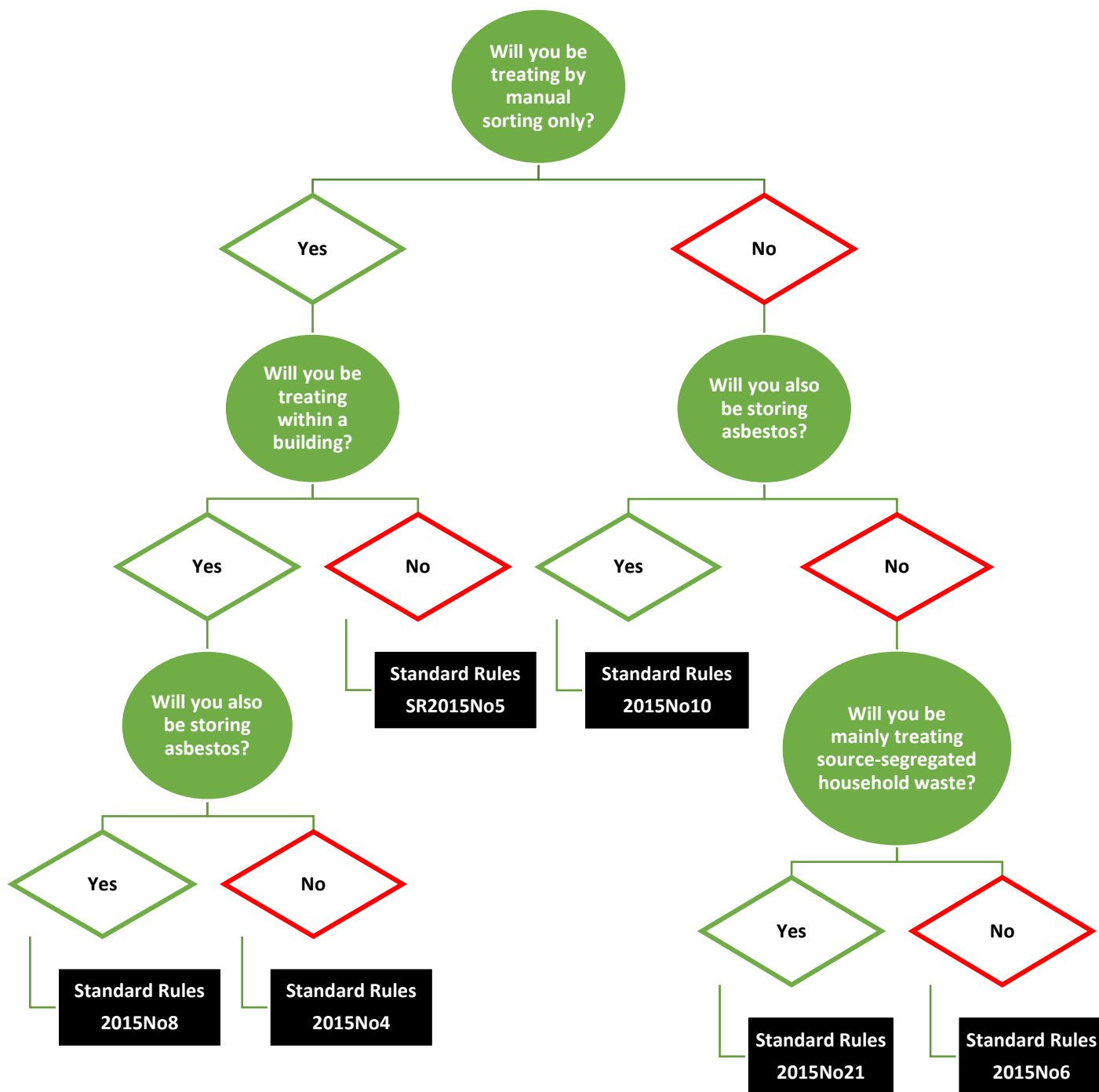
The number of Authorised Treatment Facilities for ELVs



The UK recycling, reuse, and recovery rate for ELVs

Mixed Wastes Treatment

Permits for waste transfer and treatment include a wide range of materials from municipal, commercial, and industrial sources such as mixed recyclables or residual wastes. A wide range of permits exist for these activities and also include the treatment of wastes which are included in the route map below.



When Standard Rules do not apply

Outlined within this guide are the Standard Rules permits for the treatment of wastes. Each individual permit needs to be checked to ensure that the applicant can comply with the conditions of that permit, such as the list of allowable EWC codes and annual tonnage limit. There are several qualifying criteria based upon the physical location of the site. Failure to meet these criteria will result in the applicant requiring a Bespoke permit. The criteria differs slightly from permit to permit, but typically requires an assessment of the distance to the following sensitive environmental and human receptors:



Watercourses e.g. rivers, streams, lakes. Typical offset distance is 10m from the site boundary.



Groundwaters classified as a Source Protection Zone 1 or within 50m of a spring or borehole.



Designated Habitats such as European Sites, SSSIs, Nature Reserves, Local Wildlife Sites etc.



Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) typically where combustion activities are taking place.



Human Occupation within a set distance from the site boundary, typically applied to biowastes.

Applicants may also wish to opt for a Bespoke permit to combine different activities on one site, to increase the annual waste treatment limit, to add additional EWC codes not listed in the Standard Rules set or to alter any of the standard permit conditions subject to approval.



About the author:

Ben Brown, WRM'S Technical Director, has over 15 years' experience of environmental consultancy including contaminated land and waste management. Ben has an excellent technical knowledge of numerous waste treatment processes and the utilisation of recycled products to a wide range of end use applications. He leads the Waste Technical Services team at WRM, delivering projects to the waste sector across a broad spectrum of service areas.