

Campaign launches to help people in Scotland manage their waste during the coronavirus pandemic

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Some waste and recycling collection services across Scotland are temporarily disrupted as a result of the coronavirus.

This is necessary to prioritise the health of workers in line with government guidance and deal with the impact of staff shortages.

Local authorities are working hard to make sure any disruption isn't in place any longer than it needs to be. To help householders and businesses manage their waste in the meantime, Zero Waste Scotland, SEPA, COSLA and the Scottish Government have launched a campaign to raise awareness of changes to local waste collections, providing guidance and directing people to up-date-information.

The new website – managingourwaste.scot – will give householders and businesses updates and guidance on how to manage waste. Local authority websites will continue to provide the latest updates on local service changes.

Iain Gulland, chief executive of Zero Waste Scotland, said:

“Refuse collectors are working in exceptional conditions to maintain as many essential services as they can. Now is a good time to avoid wasting so much as this is ultimately the best way to help councils cope.

“Zero Waste Scotland is working with key partners to communicate changes to householders and businesses in Scotland in the meantime. We'd encourage everyone to visit the campaign website to find out how they can best manage their waste.”

Environment and Climate Change Secretary Roseanna Cunningham said:

“We owe a massive thank you to all those in the waste industry who are working hard to keep services running in challenging circumstances. While they do their best for us it's vitally important that we do what we can to help them by following the advice on properly dealing with and reducing waste.

“The new campaign website offers lots of safe ways to help people avoid waste and protect the environment. This includes instructions on safe disposal of certain items and on keeping large items at home until recycling centres open because fly-tipping is not acceptable.

“We all have to make necessary changes to help limit the spread of the virus.

By following this advice, we can help those who are working hard to keep our services running.”

Terry A’Hearn, chief executive of SEPA, said:

“Now more than ever, we need to recognise the responsibility we have for the waste we produce, store, transport and dispose of. We all have a role to play in managing our waste during this period.

“At SEPA, we are supporting vital waste services by helping businesses to adapt. We have published guidance to help those who are struggling, as well as temporary regulatory guidance specifically for waste management.

“Equally, we will be uncompromising towards those that choose to deliberately do the wrong thing. Remember, services that sound too good to be true often are, and could lead to illegal fly-tipping, burning or illegal disposal.

“We all have a legal responsibility to ensure that only licensed professionals handle our waste. SEPA maintains an online register of licensed waste carriers and brokers enabling the public or businesses to check and ensure that contractors are sufficiently compliant.”

Councillor Steven Heddle, COSLA Environment and Economy spokesperson, said:

“Local authority staff are doing an amazing job keeping waste services running at this very difficult time. Many of us will have seen changes to our waste collections in the last few weeks and further changes may be needed in the weeks to come. This campaign shows how individuals and communities can help Local Authorities by reducing the amount of waste created. This is the right thing to do now but it will also help the environment in the longer term once we return to more normal lives”

Everyone can take action to reduce the pressure on essential services and manage their waste. Zero Waste Scotland has issued the following guidance for householders:

- Wash and squash: Washing means there is less contamination in your bin and squashing your recyclables leaves room for more. Fill up existing bins with as much waste as you can.
- Try home composting: Vegetable and fruit peelings, eggs shells, tea leaves and coffee grounds can go in a standard compost bin and create a natural fertiliser for plants.
- Keep items at home until recycling centres reopen: Now is not the time to try and get rid of large items following a spring clean. Clearing up after flytippers ultimately costs the taxpayer, leaving less funding for essential services. Report flytipping via the [Dumb Dumpers form](#) on the Zero Waste Scotland website or reporting directly to the council.

Anyone with symptoms of Covid-19 should follow government advice on securely storing personal waste to help keep themselves and waste management workers safe. This means placing items such as used tissues in a disposable rubbish bag which should be placed in another bag, tied securely, kept separate from other waste and put aside for at least 72 hours before it is put out for

collection.

Ends