

Changed practices: Restrictions on shipments of inorganic hazardous waste to Norway for disposal operations

The Norwegian Environment Agency is changing its practice concerning imports of inorganic hazardous waste for disposal operations. This change means that applications for imports of this type of waste for disposal operations from countries outside the Nordic area, normally will be denied. Notifications from the Nordic countries will to a larger extent be accepted, due to the established cooperation on disposal operations for hazardous waste in the Nordic area. However, a more stringent practice will be implemented for the Nordic region as well. In such cases, the Norwegian Environment Agency will hold a close dialogue with the competent authorities in the other Nordic countries.

Through the Basel Convention and the EU Framework Directive on Waste (2008/98), Norway has an obligation to make sure there is sufficient national treatment capacity for hazardous waste. The residual capacity for hazardous waste at landfills in Norway is limited. Norwegian authorities must comply with the requirement for national treatment capacity, among other things by ensuring that established capacity is utilized in the best possible way. The EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA) pointed this out to Norway 12th of June 2019. Based on this, the Norwegian Environment Agency is introducing a stricter line on the import of inorganic waste for disposal operations.

The country of destination may raise objections

Article 11 of the EU regulation on shipments of waste EC 1013/2006 provides an opportunity for the country of destination to raise objections to shipments destined for disposal, so-called D-operations (Basel Convention, annex IV). Objections may be based on, amongst others, the proximity principle and sufficient national capacity.

New practice for imports of inorganic hazardous waste for disposal operations

The Norwegian Environment Agency will handle applications for imports of waste on an individual basis, in accordance with following principles:

- Applications for imports of inorganic waste from countries outside the Nordic area will normally be denied.
- Applications for imports of inorganic waste from Nordic countries will to a larger extent be accepted, due to the established cooperation on disposal operations for hazardous waste in the Nordic area.

Transition period

There is a transition period in place, applicable only to landfills for ordinary waste that may accept smaller amounts of stable, non-reactive hazardous waste for disposal. Applications for the import of stable non-reactive hazardous waste for final treatment at ordinary landfills received by the Norwegian Environment Agency by 21 June 2021 will be assessed individually for 6 months' consent. Notifications received after 21 June 2021 will be rejected.