

HBF Health & Safety Committee – April 2012
Extract from Guidance on NetRegs website (29th March 2012)
Road Sweepers at Construction sites

Road sweepers at construction sites

Road sweepers are widely used for keeping public roads, site roads, runways and other accesses clean and for suppressing dust. They use water as a means of capturing dirt and dust and are intended to clean up surfaces used by vehicles.

Because road sweepers are often brought in under contract to construction projects, it can be unclear who is responsible for the environmental issues associated with them. It is better to assume that you are responsible and to check that the points below have been dealt with, than to realise only when pollution occurs that you were responsible.

What you must do

Waste carriers registration

You must register with your environmental regulator as a waste carrier if you operate a road sweeper that collects and carries construction or demolition waste.

Sweeper arisings

Sweeper arisings can be difficult to dispose of as each load can be different depending on where the sweeper has been operating.

The contents can include varying amounts of:

- water
- dirt (suspended solids)
- leaves
- stones
- litter
- hydrocarbons (petrol, oil and diesel)
- road salt
- de-icing chemicals.

Do not empty the sweeper into or near drains, surface water or groundwater as this may cause pollution.

Do not empty sweeper arisings directly onto bare ground.

Do not use road sweepers to clean up spills of oil, diesel, petrol or chemicals.

Only wash out the arisings compartment of the road sweeper in locations with controlled drainage, for example, when connected to the public sewer or a containment unit.

If you have an appropriate licence or permit, you may be able to empty sweeper arisings onto an impermeable surface that has controlled drainage.

In order to deposit waste material on land, you will require either:

- a waste management licence (Northern Ireland and Scotland)
- an environmental permit (England and Wales) or

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- a pollution prevention and control permit (Northern Ireland and Scotland).

Speak to your environmental regulator for further information.

You should only dispose of waste from road sweepers at sites that are authorised to receive that type of waste. Where possible, sweepers should travel to a suitably licensed site to unload.

Where this is not possible, for example when working through the night at an airport or on overnight road works, your environmental regulator will discuss possible options with you. For example, if you are able to empty your sweeper into a skip, your local environmental regulator may agree to this.

If you empty a road sweeper in an unauthorised location such as the verge of a public highway, you are flytipping. This is an offence, and your environmental regulator could prosecute you.