

Cornwall Energy Recovery Centre

Question and answers about the types of waste that the facility can take

1. What types of household and commercial waste can the Cornwall Energy Recovery Centre (CERC) take?

It is Cornwall Council's statutory duty to manage all of the household waste and recycling originating in Cornwall. The CERC has been sized to be able to take all of the household waste that's left over after a proportion has been separated by householders for recycling, and some of the commercial waste originating in Cornwall over the next 25 years. This means the CERC can accept most household waste that you cannot recycle and that fits into standard household black bin bags. Waste defined as 'unacceptable' which the CERC cannot take includes:

- hazardous chemicals/waste and/or radioactive materials/sources,
- explosives and/or fire arms
- asbestos
- abandoned vehicles
- gas cylinders, pressurized containers and/or fire extinguishers,
- pathological and biological waste
- large quantities of sulphur, chlorine containing materials or waste streams containing sulphur or chlorine compounds
- machinery (other than small household items that can't be recycled)
- human waste (other than in absorbent hygiene products e.g. nappies)
- human and animal remains
- industrial sludge and/or oil sludge
- large quantities of liquid wastes
- non-burnable construction material

The types of waste that the CERC can process are affected by both the environmental permit issued by the Environment Agency, and by physical restrictions. This is because large/bulky items have the potential to block and/or damage parts of the plant (please see 2. for more details). The maximum size of single pieces of acceptable waste should be 500mm x 500mm x 500mm or 25kg maximum weight. Any waste bigger needs to be broken down or taken to a Household Waste Recycling Centre.

2. Why does household and commercial waste for the CERC have to be under a certain size?

The CERC takes black bin bag household and kerbside waste, which covers the vast majority of household and commercial waste in Cornwall. However larger items aren't suitable unless they've been treated to decrease their size. This is because large items have the potential to block the CERC, which could force the facility to shut down to clear the blockage.

As part of the waste to energy process, waste is received at the CERC and delivered to the waste bunker. From here, a large crane grab picks up the waste (about 5 tonnes of waste per grab) and drops waste into a 'feed hopper' which goes into a chute. The waste then gets pushed on to the combustion grate by a hydraulic ram. At this stage size becomes a factor as the system can get blocked with large items. Unsuitable items that we have already received have included a ships anchor, gym bench and scaffold pole.

3. What happens to household waste which doesn't meet the CERC's criteria?

Bulky waste such as sofas and mattresses which are not suitable for reuse or recycling will generally continue to go to landfill. Cornwall Council is working with Suez and exploring ways to treat some of this waste so it's suitable to go into the CERC in the longer term.

4. How can I dispose of commercial and industrial waste?

We encourage everyone to recycle as much waste as possible. If businesses want to send trade waste to the CERC, they must agree commercial terms with SUEZ. You can contact the SUEZ recycling and recovery UK Cornwall helpdesk – email cornwallhelpdesk@sita.co.uk or telephone 08456 300300.

Some facilities still take commercial and industrial waste in Cornwall although these facilities are not provided by Cornwall Council as it's not our statutory function to do so. For example, we understand that such facilities are still being provided at Lean Quarry near Liskeard. Cannon Bridge landfill is now only accepting limited commercial and industrial waste. We appreciate the challenge that some businesses may have to find suitable outlets for their commercial and industrial waste. Although it's a matter for a business to continue to manage its waste disposal we are working with the industry to develop longer term options where possible.

5. What can be done to make commercial waste that can't be recycled suitable for the facility?

Businesses that want to send trade waste that can't be recycled to the CERC must agree commercial terms with SUEZ and meet their acceptance criteria for the facility. The CERC will be able to take some trade waste and this may involve shredding bulkier waste into a suitable size first. We are aware of a few companies in Cornwall who are looking to invest in shredders.

6. Will the CERC process commercial waste from outside of Cornwall?

The CERC has been designed to manage Cornwall's residual waste over the next 25 years. To maximise its energy recovery potential, household waste from

Cornwall will be supplemented by commercial waste, from Cornwall and from outside Cornwall. The cost of transporting waste long distances can be significant, so securing the majority of waste for the CERC from Cornwall is preferable. On any given day, SUEZ will firstly secure the available Cornish household waste for the CERC, secondly assess the availability and suitability of local commercial waste and then identify suitable commercial waste from outside of Cornwall.

7. If the CERC can process most kerbside and household waste and some trade waste should we bother to recycle?

Yes, wherever possible! It is always preferable to recycle the materials that are collected at your kerbside and received at your local Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) rather than sending it for energy recovery at the CERC. We therefore encourage everyone to recycle their household glass, textiles, paper, cans, card and plastic bottles (and plastic pots, tubs and trays if you're part of the trial or new rollout). There is lots of information about the benefits of recycling at: <https://www.recyclenow.com/why-recycle>.

Recycling is one aspect of the "waste hierarchy". This hierarchy is included in the Waste Strategy for England (www.gov.uk/government/publications/waste-strategy-for-england-2007) and gives top priority to preventing waste in the first place, thus **Reducing** the amount that you produce. When waste is created, priority should be given to **Reusing** it, then **Recycling** it, before considering recovery energy from it (for example, at the CERC), and last of all disposal (e.g. landfill).

For details of your nearest HWRC visit <http://www.suezcornwall.co.uk/what-we-do/recycling/>.

8. What are the benefits of the CERC?

The CERC will recover energy from the waste that it processes every year, and use it to create enough electricity to power the equivalent of 21,000 homes. It is also set up to allow it to export energy as useful heat in the future. The CERC makes us less reliant on the disposal of residual waste to landfill and offers a more sustainable management method for this waste, in accordance with the waste hierarchy. Even though there are some residues left over after the waste to energy process this is reduced to around less than 10% of the original waste. There is an Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA) reprocessing facility located on the same site as the CERC, where metals are removed from the ash for recycling and the IBA is processed into several different grades of useful aggregate. More information can be found online at <http://www.ballastphoenix.co.uk/>