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Frequently Asked Questions Recycling Centre Limits for Commercial-type Vehicles (updated 28/07/2021)

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1. Background

Q: Why the need to limit certain vehicle types at recycling centres?

A: The aim is to create space for additional recyclable materials at recycling centres to improve services to households. This is done by providing businesses an alternative to take their waste to waste transfer stations and putting in place a limit on commercial-type vehicles at recycling centres to prevent the unlawful use of recycling centres by businesses unwilling to pay for the disposal of their waste and recycling.

Currently some businesses unlawfully use recycling centres by disguising their business waste as household waste. Based on car counts and anecdotal evidence, business waste is estimated to be up to 20% (10,000 tonnes) of the waste handled at recycling centres annually and cost around £0.5 million to dispose of – this is paid for by taxpayers.

In practice the new system means that householders using commercial type vehicles (a van, a flatbed pick-up, a minibus or a trailer) to take materials to recycling centres are limited to 24 visits per year which should be plenty for anybody using recycling centres for their household waste and recycling only.

Q: Who was consulted on these proposals and who made the decision?

A: Following a public consultation in the autumn 2018 on the Council's new 5-year waste strategy, Infrastructure Services Committee approved the waste strategy, including the proposals to move trade waste from recycling centres to waste transfer stations, in January 2019. Area committees were then consulted in June 2019 on the proposals on how this would be done in practice, including the permit system at recycling centres. Infrastructure Services Committee approved the final permit scheme in August 2019. A booking system was introduced at recycling centres in 2020 to aid physical distancing due to Covid-19. The booking system will now incorporate the limits agreed on different vehicle types.

Q: How can the Council justify reducing services – what do I pay my Council Tax for?

A: The aim is to create space for additional recyclable materials at recycling centres to improve services to households.

This is done by providing businesses an alternative to take their waste to waste transfer stations and by limiting the number of visits made to recycling centres using commercial-type vehicles to prevent unlawful use of recycling centres by businesses unwilling to pay for the disposal of their waste and recycling.

The disposal of business waste taken to recycling centres is estimated to cost around £0.5 million per year to dispose of – this is currently paid for by the taxpayers.

Q: Will the new system lead to fly-tipping? What are you going to do about that?

A: Businesses and householders fly-tip as is. There are always concerns about fly-tipping when waste and recycling services are changed. In Aberdeenshire's and other local authorities' experience, fly-tipping resulting from service changes tends to be time-limited and usually very localised.



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2. How will the system work

Q: What are the new limits?

A: Visits to recycling centres in vans, minibuses and trailers will be limited to 24 visits per year. Car derived vans towing a trailer are limited to 12 visits per year and cars, car derived vans or pick ups towing a horse trailer is 6 per year.

Cars, estate cars, people carriers, MPVs, 4x4s, domestic style pick-ups and mobility adapted vehicles (i.e., any vehicle that has been adapted to suit the needs of individuals with disabilities) will have unrestricted access to recycling centres, unless they tow a trailer or a horse box. Booking is still required

Trailers must be 10ft (3m) or shorter in length (excluding the tow bar) and be towed with a car, domestic style pick up, car derived van or a mobility adapted vehicle. Please note that you cannot tow a trailer or a horse box with a large van or minibus.

Q: Are any vehicles banned from using recycling centres?

Under the new scheme householders can no longer use vehicles over 3.5 tonnes or with more than 4 wheels, tippers, plant vehicles and trailers over 10ft (3m) in length for taking materials to recycling centres. Domestic type pick-ups have unlimited access. Commercial type flat bed pick-ups can no longer visit recycling centres.



Q: Who can visit recycling centres?

A: Recycling centres are for only householders in Aberdeenshire Council area, to use. Businesses can sign up to [a trade waste collection service](#) or use [the business waste drop-off service](#).

Q: How are the number of visits applied?

A: The new limits will be applied automatically when you book your visit. The number of visits is applied per household and links to your home address.

A household can use vehicles under both rules, i.e. they have unlimited visits with a car, estate cars, people carriers, MPVs, 4x4s, domestic style pick-ups and mobility adapted vehicles (i.e., any vehicle that has been adapted to suit the needs of individuals with disabilities) and 24 visits in a year for



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visiting recycling centres using commercial-type vehicles (i.e. vans, minibuses, trailers up to 10ft in length and hire vans).

In practice this means that a household could use a car for an unlimited number of visits to a recycling centre (booking still required) and use the same car to tow a trailer to take materials to a recycling centre 24 times a year.

The year for commercial-type vehicles runs from 1st April to 31st March.

Q: Does the new system work at all recycling centres?

A: Yes, the new scheme applies at all of the 15 recycling centres run by Aberdeenshire Council. A visit at any recycling centre will deduct one visit from your annual, depending on the vehicle type you use. For locations, opening hours and materials accepted at each centre, please see www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/recyclingcentres

Q: How will I know how many visits I have left?

A: You will receive an email after each booking to notify you of how many visits you have left.

Q: What is the difference between an MPV and a minibus?

A: An MPV can have up to 9 seats (including the driver's seat), whilst a minibus has 10 or more seats (including the driver's seat). An MPV has unlimited visits to a recycling centres, whilst a minibus as a commercial-type vehicle is limited to 24 visits per year.

Q: Why is my large trailer banned from recycling centres?

A: Trailers up to 10ft (3m) in length (excluding the tow bar) can be used for taking materials to recycling centres. Large trailers are used by many businesses and limiting the trailer size is another way to prevent businesses from unlawfully using recycling centres.

Q: How are you going to check my trailer size?

A: Site attendants can measure up a trailer if they think it might be longer than 10ft (3m). We will ask you to leave the recycling centre if your trailer is found to be longer than 10ft (3m), and for repeat offences we may ban you either temporarily or permanently from using recycling centres.

Q. How can our community group use recycling centres?

A: Local community groups can contact their local Community Waste Officer by emailing awo@aberdeenshire.gov.uk to make specific arrangements for their group.

What if...

Q: What if I don't have online access to book a visit?

A: Please ask a friend or relative to make an online booking on your behalf or call us on 03456 081 207.

Q: What if I move house?

A: If you move house, you will need to make bookings under your new address. If the previous household has already used all the visits for that address, please call us 03456 081207.



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Q: What if I change my car?

A: Whilst a vehicle registration is required to make a booking, the limit on the number of visits is applied by address. Hence bookings can continue to be made even if a household changes their car.

Q: What if I tow my trailer or a horse box with a van?

A: You can use your car derived van to tow a trailer or a horse box, but not a large van such as a transit or luton. The logic is that a large van has plenty of space in the load bed at the back for transporting household recycling and waste.

Q: Why do I only get 24 visits if I tow my trailer with a pick-up?

A: Initially pick-ups were limited to 12 visits when towing a trailer but as a concession it was seen that domestic style pick-ups are generally used like a car or 4x4 so the 24 limit is now for the trailer only.

Q: Why do I only get 12 visits if I tow my trailer with a car derived van?

A: Initially car derived vans were not allowed to tow a trailer but as a concession it was seen because both the car derived van and the trailer could be loaded with waste 12 visits per year should be sufficient for the average domestic household.

Q: What if I have both a trailer and a towable horse box?

A: A trailer can be used up to 24 times per year, but towable horse boxes are limited to 6 visits per year due to the fact that you can fit in much more in a towable horse box than a trailer.

Q: What if I hire a trailer?

A: It does not matter whether you own or hire the trailer. You need to make a booking for a trailer using the registration of the vehicle you are planning to use to tow the hire trailer. Please remember the trailer size is limited to 10ft (3m) in length (excluding the tow bar).

Q: What if I have a car-derived van, a crew van, a camper van etc. – are those limited to 24 visits per year as well?

A: Yes, they are. Vans by default are commercial type vehicles, hence if you want to use any type of van to take your household recycling or non-recyclable waste to a recycling centre, you'll need to make a booking for a van. You cannot tow a trailer with these vehicles, except for a car-derived van at all sites.

Q: What if my company vehicle is the only vehicle I have?

A: You can use your company vehicle to take your household recycling and non-recyclable waste to recycling centres. Please note though that, if we suspect that you are using your company vehicle to take business waste or recycling to recycling centres, we will investigate further and, if we find that you are, we may ban you from using recycling centres altogether.



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Q: What if I use my work van with a logo on it for taking materials to recycling centres?

A: You can use your work van with a logo to take your household recycling and non-recyclable waste to recycling centres. Please note though that, if we suspect that you are using your work van to take business waste or recycling to recycling centres, we will investigate further and, if we find that you are, we may ban you from using recycling centres altogether.

Q: What if I hire a van?

A: If you hire a van, you need to make a booking for a van and type in 'hire van' instead of the registration number, and bring hire documentation (not a lease) together with matching personal identification (e.g. driving licence) to show to a recycling centre attendant to access a recycling centre. If the barrier is down, toot your horn and a site attendant will come to the gate to check your documentation and lift the barrier.

Q: What if I don't live in Aberdeenshire?

A: You can only book using an Aberdeenshire address. In emergency situations, for example due to an urgent house clearance following a death, relatives not residing in Aberdeenshire can make a booking using the relevant household address in Aberdeenshire. If all visits have already been used, relatives can call 03456 081207 to request an additional visit.

Q: What if somebody else uses my allocation?

A: We have a monitoring process in place which does flag up abuse. We investigate, contact the suspected abuser, warn them and, as the last resort, can ban them from booking again. If you become aware of somebody else making bookings using your address, please call us on 03456 081207.