

New POPs legislation affecting office furniture waste

2 years ago



What are POPs? Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) are a group of organic compounds that have toxic properties and chemical substances that don't break down, can travel long distances and persist in the environment. POPs accumulate in food chains and pose a risk to human health and the environment.

In December 2022 the Environment Agency (EA) issued new guidance on how soft furnishings containing Persistent Organic Compounds (POPs) should be managed.

How do you know if you have POPs Waste:

Waste domestic seating is any item of seating of a household type from households or businesses that is waste. Upholstered domestic seating may contain POPs. For example:

- Sofas
- Sofa Beds
- Armchairs
- Kitchen and Dining Room Chairs
- Stools and Foot Stools
- Office Chairs
- Futons
- Bean Bags, Floor and Sofa Cushions

This includes any part made of or containing leather, synthetic leather, other fabric, or foam.

- (Mattresses, curtains, blinds and beds are NOT domestic seating and are NOT covered by this

guidance as are items that are not upholstered, for example, a wooden chair without a cushioned or textile back, seat, or arms.)

What the EA guidance means for you:

- Waste upholstered domestic seating containing POPs must not be mixed with any other waste streams, it must not be broken down and needs to be stored and handled separately.
- It must be sorted and stored in a way that prevents:
 - Damaging it
 - Release of POPs
 - Contamination with other waste
- POPs waste should be correctly identified and categorised. There is no specific European Waste Catalogue (EWC) code for POPs – in most cases, with sofas, armchairs etc. We anticipate using 20 03 07 Household and this must be clearly displayed on your Waste Transfer Notes.
- The EA has clarified that it will be measuring compliance against its regulations. It therefore issued new guidance in December 2022 regarding identifying, classifying, handling and disposing of POPs waste at:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/identify-and-classify-waste-containing-persistent-organic-pollutants-pops> Therefore, councils have now been warned that they must now incinerate all upholstered waste domestic seating including seating textiles and foams. Waste upholstered domestic seating containing POPs must not be landfilled, mixed with other non-POPs-containing wastes, reused or recycled. These items must be sent for incineration or used as a fuel in, for example, a cement kiln.

What the Floorbrite Waste Team can do for you:

Many companies are still not aware of this change in legislation; however it can cause a costly issue and or fines, as waste management companies will now refuse skip transportation if contaminated by upholstered furniture. However, the Floorbrite Group are able to remove these items from site, strip down the components such as wood and metal for recycling and dispose of the foam and upholstered elements in a safe way.

- For customers who produce POPs waste on a regular basis, we can supply individual containers for your waste domestic seating and soft furnishings that may contain POPs;
- In the case where production of that waste is minimal, we can collect individual items for you using our pick-up (man and van) service;
- As always, we will in all cases, provide Waste Transfer Notes that correctly identify your POPs waste and its disposal. If you would like to discuss this further or have any questions regarding this, or any of your waste management services, please contact us.

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