Waste Carrier Registration FAQ's

Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)

Guidance for Businesses, Organisations, Council Staff, Amenity Site Operators and Customer Service Teams

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1. Why is waste carrier registration required?

Waste carrier registration helps ensure that waste is collected, transported and disposed of legally. It allows regulators and councils to identify legitimate waste carriers and helps prevent fly-tipping and other illegal waste activity.

The requirement to register as a waste carrier was introduced under **Article 38 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997**, which established the framework for the registration of controlled waste carriers in Northern Ireland. The detailed registration requirements are set out in the **Controlled Waste (Registration of Carriers and Seizure of Vehicles) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999**. Together, this legislation makes it an offence to transport controlled waste without the appropriate registration and provides enforcement powers against illegal waste activity.

This registration system helps ensure that only authorised individuals and businesses transport waste and supports the wider duty of care requirements placed on those who produce, carry and dispose of waste.

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2. What is a Waste Carrier Registration?

A Waste Carrier Registration is issued by NIEA and authorises a person, business or organisation to transport controlled waste, or in some circumstances act as a waste broker or dealer.

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3. What happens if someone transports waste without registration?

Transporting controlled waste without the required registration is a criminal offence. Enforcement action may be taken by NIEA and courts can impose penalties.

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4. What is "controlled waste"?

Controlled waste includes:

- Household waste
- Commercial waste
- Industrial waste

- Construction and demolition waste
- Asbestos
- Clinical waste
- Tyres
- Liquid waste
- Certain hazardous wastes

If a business is transporting these wastes as part of its activities, registration will normally be required.

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5. Why might a council ask for a Waste Carrier Registration?

Councils may ask commercial users visiting Household Recycling Centres or Amenity Sites to provide evidence of a Waste Carrier Registration where waste is being transported as part of a business activity. This helps ensure compliance with waste legislation and assists in preventing the unlawful disposal of commercial waste.

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6. What are the two types of registration?

Upper Tier Registration

Required for most businesses that:

- Transport other people's waste.
- Collect waste from customers.
- Transport construction or demolition waste.
- Arrange for waste to be transported or disposed of on behalf of others.
- Buy or sell waste as part of a business.

Lower Tier Registration

A free registration available only for certain organisations and activities that meet the criteria.

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7. Who can register as a Lower Tier Carrier?

The following may qualify:

- Government Departments
- District Councils
- Waste collection, disposal or regulation authorities
- Charities

- Voluntary organisations
- Businesses carrying only animal by-products
- Businesses carrying only waste from agricultural premises
- Businesses carrying only waste from a mine or quarry
- A business that does not carry construction and demolition waste, or waste which has been produced by another person/organisation.

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8. How much does a Waste Carrier Registration cost?

Upper Tier Registration

Application Type	Fee
New Upper Tier Registration	**£191**
Upper Tier Renewal	**£96**
Change of Licence Type (e.g. adding Broker or Dealer activities)	**£49**
Changes to address, email, telephone number or contact person	**Free**

Upper Tier registrations are valid for three years and must be renewed before the expiry date. Failure to renew before expiry may result in the registration being closed and a new application being required. Changes to registration details, such as contact information, can normally be made free of charge. A fee only applies where the actual licence category is being amended.

Please note: *The fees listed below are correct as of* ***13 November 2026****. Waste Carrier Registration fees are subject to periodic review and may be amended in future. Applicants should refer to the current DAERA Registration of Carriers guidance or application portal for the most up-to-date fees before applying.*

Lower Tier Registration

Application Type	Fee
New Lower Tier Registration	**Free**
Renewal	**Not Required**
Changes to Contact Details	**Free**

Lower Tier registrations are available only to organisations and businesses that meet the eligibility criteria. Lower Tier registrations do not expire and do not require renewal, provided the

organisation continues to meet the Lower Tier requirements and registration details remain accurate.

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9. How can you verify a registration?

A public register of Upper Tier and Lower Tier Waste Carriers is available on the DAERA website.

Searches can normally be conducted using:

- Registration number
- Business name
- Postcode

This allows council staff to verify whether an individual or business holds a current registration.

Upper Tier Register - Registered carriers database (upper tier applications) | Public registers | DAERA

Lower Tier Register - Registered carriers database (lower tier applications) | Public registers | DAERA

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10. What is a Change of Licence Type?

A **Change of Licence Type** applies where a business or organisation already holds a Waste Carrier Registration but needs to change the category of registration recorded on the licence. A modification fee of **£49** may apply where the licence type itself is being amended.

Examples include:

- Adding **Broker** activities to an existing Carrier registration.
- Adding **Dealer** activities to an existing Carrier registration.
- Changing from a Carrier-only registration to a Carrier/ Broker registration.
- Changing from a Carrier-only registration to a Carrier/Dealer registration.
- Adding additional authorised waste activities that alter the registration category.

When is a Change of Licence Type Not Required?

A licence modification fee is **not required** for administrative updates such as:

- Change of contact person.
- Change of business address.
- Change of correspondence address.
- Change of email address.
- Change of telephone number.

These updates can normally be made free of charge on the 'Modifications' section of the Registration of Carriers page to ensure NIEA records and the public register remain accurate.

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11. What is a Waste Broker?

A broker arranges for waste to be recovered or disposed of on behalf of another person but does not physically transport the waste. Most waste brokers require registration.

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12. What is a Waste Dealer?

A dealer buys and sells waste without necessarily taking physical possession of it. Most waste dealers require registration.

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13. What Proof of Address is Accepted for an Upper Tier Application?

Applicants for a new Upper Tier Waste Carrier Registration must provide proof of address as part of the application process. This is used to verify the address associated with the registration and ensure the Waste Carrier Register remains accurate.

Acceptable Proofs of Address

The following documents are accepted:

- Correspondence from HMRC
- Utility bill (electricity, gas or water)
- Landline/ Mobile telephone bill
- Council rates bill
- Land and Property Services (LPS) correspondence

Documents Not Accepted

The following documents are **not accepted** as proof of address:

- Bank statements or banking documents
- Invoices
- Tenancy agreements
- Receipts
- Handwritten documents
- Altered or amended documents

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14. How Long Does It Take to Process an Application?

The legislation allows NIEA up to two months to determine an application.

Most applications are processed more quickly; however, processing times may vary depending on:

- The completeness of the application
- The accuracy of supporting documentation
- Whether further information is required
- Any environmental offences declared during the application process

Applicants can help avoid delays by ensuring all information and supporting documents are submitted correctly.

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15. What Happens After My Registration Is Approved?

Once approved:

Upper Tier applicants will receive:

- An approval email
- A Waste Carrier Registration certificate

Lower Tier applicants will receive:

- An approval email or registration confirmation letter

All approved registrations are entered onto the public Waste Carrier Register maintained by NIEA.

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16. What is a Waste Carrier Licence Number?

Upper Tier and Lower Tier Waste Carrier Registrations are issued with a licence number beginning:

Upper Tier - ROC UT XXXX

Lower Tier - ROC LT XXXX

Customers may be asked to provide this number when contacting NIEA or when providing evidence of registration to third parties.

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17. What is a ROC Application Number?

A ROC Application Number is provided when you submit an application. This is not your licence number and is not confirmation that you are registered. This number is used to make changes online to your licence aswell as tracking it's progress.

The ROC Application Number may be required when:

- Renewing a registration

- Modifying registration details
- Cancelling a registration
- Contacting the Registration of Carriers Team regarding an existing registration

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18. Why Is It Important to Keep My Registration Details Up To Date?

Registration holders must ensure that their contact details remain accurate and up to date.

Keeping records current helps NIEA:

- Contact licence holders regarding compliance matters
- Issue renewal reminders
- Provide regulatory updates and important information
- Maintain accurate public register records

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19. What Changes Must Be Reported to NIEA?

Registration holders should notify NIEA as soon as possible if there are changes to activities. For example:

- Business name
- Contact person
- Business address
- Correspondence address
- Email address
- Telephone number

Failure to maintain accurate records may affect NIEA's ability to contact a registration holder.

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20. What Happens If My Business Changes Legal Status?

A new Waste Carrier Registration may be required where the legal entity changes.

Examples include:

- A sole trader becoming a limited company
- A company changing ownership structure
- Significant changes to a partnership arrangement

Where the legal person or organisation registered changes, applicants should contact the Registration of Carriers Team for advice before continuing to operate.

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21. If someone only carries their own waste, do they need registration?

Usually yes. Businesses that regularly transport waste produced by their own business should normally register as a Lower Tier Carrier unless the waste includes construction or demolition waste, which generally requires an Upper Tier Registration.

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22. Does a gardener need a Waste Carrier Registration?

If a gardener only transports waste that is generated as part of their gardening activities, such as:

- Grass cuttings
- Hedge trimmings
- Tree branches
- Green waste arising from gardening and grounds maintenance work

They would normally require a Lower Tier Waste Carrier Registration, as the waste is produced in the course of their own gardening activity.

However, if the gardener undertakes hard landscaping or construction-related works, such as:

- Paving and patios
- Fencing installation
- Groundworks and excavations
- Drainage works
- Construction or demolition activities

and transports the resulting waste, this would be considered Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste. In these circumstances, they would require an Upper Tier Waste Carrier Registration.

Example:
A gardener cutting grass and removing hedge trimmings from a customer's property would generally be eligible for a Lower Tier Registration. However, if the same business removes waste arising from installing a fence, laying paving, or carrying out excavation works, they would require an Upper Tier Registration.

Important: It is essential that you check any site access requirements with your local council before transporting waste. While NIEA determines waste carrier registration requirements, NIEA has no role in deciding who is permitted to use council-operated Household Recycling Centres or other council-run waste facilities. Access to these sites is at the discretion of the individual council and they can determine what's required to gain entry.

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23. Does a builder need a Waste Carrier Registration?

Yes.

Builders, contractors and tradespeople transporting construction and demolition waste generally require an **Upper Tier** Waste Carrier Registration, even if the waste was produced during their own work.

Examples include:

- Rubble
- Bricks
- Concrete
- Tiles
- Plasterboard
- Soil from construction activities

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24. Does a plumber, electrician or joiner need a Waste Carrier Registration?

Yes. Where a plumber, electrician, joiner, or similar tradesperson transports waste arising from work carried out for a customer, they will generally require an **Upper Tier** Waste Carrier Registration.

This is because these activities are typically associated with construction, renovation, maintenance, improvement, or demolition work, and the waste being transported arises from those works.

Examples include:

- Scrap pipework
- Electrical wiring and cabling
- Fixtures and fittings
- Timber offcuts
- Damaged materials removed during repair or installation work
- Construction and demolition (C&D) waste generated during building, refurbishment, or maintenance activities

Examples of relevant work include:

- Plumbing installations and repairs
- Electrical installations and rewiring
- Joinery and carpentry work
- Kitchen and bathroom fitting
- Property renovations and refurbishments

- Construction, maintenance, and demolition activities

As waste from these activities is commonly classified as Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste, those transporting it as part of their business activities will generally require an Upper Tier Waste Carrier Registration.

Important: It is essential that you check any site access requirements with your local council before transporting waste. While NIEA determines waste carrier registration requirements, NIEA has no role in deciding who is permitted to use council-operated Household Recycling Centres or other council-run waste facilities. Access to these sites is at the discretion of the individual council.

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25. What if someone only takes waste to a recycling centre occasionally?

Frequency does not determine whether registration is required.

If a person transports waste as part of a business activity, even occasionally, they may require registration.

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26. Do farmers require a Waste Carrier Registration?

A business carrying only waste from agricultural premises may qualify for Lower Tier Registration.

However, if other waste streams are being transported, a different registration type may be required.

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27. What Happens If I Am Convicted of an Environmental Offence?

Applicants are required to declare relevant environmental offences as part of the registration process.

Where a relevant environmental offence has been declared, NIEA may request additional information before determining an application.

Each case is considered on its own merits and registration is not automatically refused.

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28. What Is a Post-Conviction Plan?

Where an environmental offence has been declared, NIEA may request a Post-Conviction Plan.

This document allows the applicant to explain:

- The circumstances of the offence
- Steps taken to address the issue
- Measures introduced to prevent reoccurrence

The information provided will be considered as part of the application assessment process.

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29. Are charities required to hold a Waste Carrier Registration?

Yes.

Charities carrying controlled waste should normally register as Lower Tier Carriers. There is no fee for this registration.

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30. Common Examples

Activity	Registration Required
Householder taking their own household waste to a recycling centre	No
Gardener transporting customer green waste	Upper Tier
Builder transporting rubble from a customer's property	Upper Tier
Electrician taking cable and fittings from a job	Upper Tier
Charity transporting donated items and waste	Lower Tier
Council transporting waste	Lower Tier
Farmer carrying only agricultural waste	Lower Tier
Business carrying only its own office waste	Lower Tier

Examples are provided for guidance only. Individual circumstances may vary.

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31. What Is My Duty of Care When Handling Waste?

Anyone who produces, carries, brokers, deals in, or disposes of controlled waste has a legal duty of care to ensure it is managed responsibly.

This includes:

- Ensuring waste is transferred only to authorised persons
- Accurately describing waste being transferred
- Completing and retaining Waste Transfer Notes where required
- Ensuring waste is stored and transported safely

Failure to comply with duty of care requirements may result in enforcement action.

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32. Do Additional Rules Apply to Hazardous Waste?

Yes.

Businesses handling hazardous waste must comply with additional legal requirements.

Examples of hazardous waste include:

- Asbestos
- Certain chemicals
- Solvents
- Contaminated materials
- Some clinical wastes

Further guidance is available from NIEA's Hazardous Waste Team.

Need Further Advice?

ROC Website: Registration of carriers and brokers | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Where there is any uncertainty regarding waste carrier registration requirements, applicants should contact the NIEA Waste Carrier Registration Unit (ROC Team) for advice before transporting waste.

Email: ROC@daera-ni.gov.uk

For further information on Waste Carrier Registration requirements, guidance and application processes, please contact the team using the email address above. Providing details of your business activities and the types of waste you intend to transport will help ensure that the correct advice is provided.

Please note: NIEA can advise on waste carrier registration requirements but cannot determine access arrangements for council-operated waste facilities. Access to Household Recycling Centres and other council-run sites is determined by the relevant local council, and applicants should contact their local council directly to confirm any site-specific requirements.

Key message: If waste is being transported as part of a business activity, an Upper Tier Waste Carrier Registration will normally be required unless the person or organisation falls within one of the specific Lower Tier categories.

This document may be shared with businesses, organisations and members of the public, or published on websites and information portals alongside links to the NIEA public register and online application service.