


Hazardous waste

 In 1999, Norway generated 631000 tonnes of hazardous waste. More than 90 per cent of this was delivered to approved treatment facilities. This still leaves 50000 tonnes that escaped proper treatment, 20000 tonnes more than in 1994.

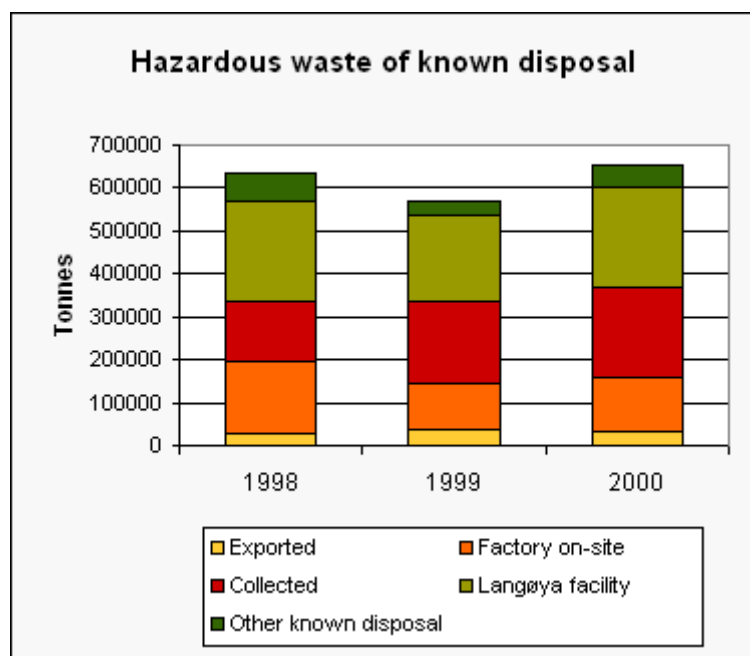
About 92 per cent is collected

Statistics Norway estimates that about 631.000 tonnes of hazardous waste were generated in Norway in 1999. The fate of about 50.000 tonnes are unknown, and may well have escaped proper treatment.

The 50.000 tonnes of missing hazardous waste include the following:

- about 33.000 tonnes of waste oil and other oily waste
- 6.700 tonnes of demolition waste containing PCB
- 5.800 tonnes of solvents
- studies suggest that a typical Norwegian household generates about 4 kg hazardous waste per head per year, and that 20-50 per cent of it is collected by the municipal refuse service.

The graph below shows that about 600.000 tonnes of hazardous waste undergo controlled treatment.



Source: Norwegian Pollution Control Authority/NORSAS

Dispersal of hazardous chemicals

Hazardous waste in the wrong places can represent a more serious danger to health and the environment than ordinary waste does. This is because it contains toxic, inflammable, corrosive or other hazardous chemicals. If hazardous waste is dumped with ordinary waste it may result in the dispersal of harmful substances in the environment. They may spread via seepage of contaminated water from landfills, or in the flue gases, ash or slag produced in the incineration process. Hazardous waste which is disposed in the sewage may cause increased pollution of sea and seabed due to purifying plant malfunctioning.

Growth in consumption of hazardous waste

The volume of waste in a society is closely related to its level of consumption. A growth in consumption

translates into a growth in waste. It also means more hazardous waste, especially waste from consumer products. The amounts of hazardous waste generated are also closely related to the development in business and industry. In Norway, we have experienced a considerable increase in the amounts of hazardous waste generated by the offshore industry in the 1990s.

More hazardous waste is processed now

Increasing knowledge of the hazardous properties of substances, combined with better collection and sorting of waste at source, has led to a rise in the amounts of hazardous waste that are registered and processed. An example is electrical/electronics (EE) waste, where harmful components are now segregated for special collection. In the old days whole TV sets were simply dumped as consume waste without removing the hazardous components.

Promoting sound management

All sorts of measures are employed to promote proper handling of hazardous waste, including special regulations, inspections and audits, industry-specific schemes, increased producer responsibility and information campaigns.

Regulations

Under the Pollution Control Act the competent Norwegian authorities have issued the Regulations concerning Hazardous Waste. These define waste categories and lay down rules for permits to manage hazardous waste, the obligation to deliver hazardous waste, declaration, the responsibilities of the municipalities, packaging, inspection and audit. Many other provisions govern specific types of hazardous waste and associated problems, including batteries, waste oil, oily water, photographic chemicals, amalgam, PCBs, CFCs, fire and explosion hazards, export and import, chemicals in general, warning labels and health, environmental and safety activities in enterprises ("internal control").

Permits and licences

With few exceptions, a permit is required from the competent pollution control authorities before a contractor may process hazardous waste. The Norwegian Pollution Control Authority issues permits for collection and processing of hazardous waste, whilst the county governor issues permits for the reception and temporary storage of hazardous waste. The permits specify criteria that must be met to ensure proper handling.

Control and inspection

The pollution control authorities supervise and inspect all handling of hazardous waste.

Industry-specific schemes and taxation fees

Various industry-specific schemes and taxes are also used for hazardous waste. One provides for a refund when waste oil is delivered to approved facilities. Another is an auto-industry return scheme for lead accumulators.

Information, guidance and help

Norsas (the Norwegian Resource Centre for Waste and Recycling) was set up in 1989. Part of its charter is to dispense information on hazardous waste. Norsas focuses on the declaration system for hazardous waste and keeps statistics. It also does commission work for the Ministry of the Environment and the Norwegian Pollution Control Authority. The pollution control authorities also provides information and advice in brochures and guidelines, in correspondence and by telephone.

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