

Biodegradable Municipal Waste Statistics for Ireland

Introduction

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) produces national statistics on waste generation and management to meet legislative reporting obligations and inform policy.

This release reports on biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) disposed to landfill between 2010 and 2016. BMW comprises those elements of the municipal waste streams that will rot or degrade biologically, for example food waste, garden & parks waste and paper & cardboard. Under the Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC) there are targets for the diversion of BMW from disposal to landfill. Diversion of BMW from landfill will assist mitigation of odour nuisance, reduce the aftercare burden for landfills and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Key points

- Ireland has met all Landfill Directive targets to date.
- The tonnage of BMW disposed to landfill decreased between 2010 and 2014 but increased in 2015 and 2016.
- Three landfills had their annual authorised acceptance limit increased for 2016 to manage the anticipated residual municipal waste arising in 2016.
- In July 2016, Ireland notified the European Commission of its intention to avail of the derogation for the 2016 target under the Landfill Directive i.e. to defer the fulfillment of the target from 2016 to 2020.
- Seven landfills accepted municipal waste for disposal in 2016 compared to twenty-five in 2010.
- It is very important that there is adequate treatment infrastructure in the State to manage the increasing diversion from landfill of biodegradable waste.

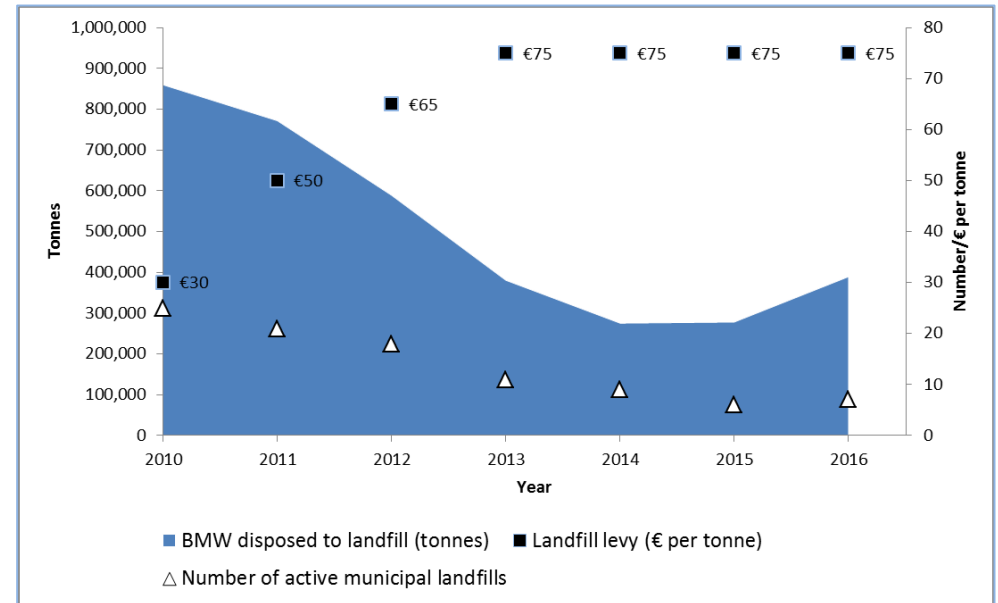
Data collection

Each landfill operator accepting municipal waste is required to report to the EPA on a quarterly basis the quantity of municipal waste and BMW accepted for disposal in the previous quarter.

Data analysis

Figure 1 shows the trend in the quantity of BMW disposed to landfill between 2010 and 2016. The increasing landfill levy had an impact in diverting waste from landfill to energy recovery. The number of open landfills decreased from twenty-five in 2010 to seven in 2016. Since 2015 the quantity of BMW disposed to landfill has been increasing. The majority of BMW tonnage in 2016 (64%) came from residual waste from household and commercial 2-bin and 3-bin systems.

Figure 1. BMW disposed to landfill (tonnes), landfill levy (€ per tonne) and number of landfills accepting municipal waste for disposal (2010-2016).



Landfill authorised acceptance limits

Three landfills (Drehid, Knockharley and Ballynagran) applied to have their annual authorised acceptance limit increased for 2016 (total additional capacity = 360,000 tonnes)¹ in order to manage the anticipated residual municipal waste arising in 2016. The increase in Drehid Landfill's annual authorised acceptance limit to 360,000 tonnes is maintained for 2017.

Legislation and targets

The Landfill Directive sets limits on the quantity of BMW that can be disposed to landfill. The limits (tied to 1995 statistical base year) are phased, with each phase having a stricter diversion obligation (Table 1). Ireland met the 2010 and 2013 targets. In July 2016 Ireland notified the Commission of its intention to avail of a four-year derogation for the 2016 target, which means that it does not take effect until 2020. The final target (maximum quantity of 427,000 tonnes BMW landfilled) was met in 2016 (390,000 tonnes disposed) although with the derogation this target is not in force until 2020.

Table 1. BMW Landfill targets for Ireland

Target year	Landfill Directive target	Maximum quantity BMW to be landfilled (tonnes, rounded)
2010	75% of quantity BMW generated in 1995	916,000
2013	50% of quantity BMW generated in 1995	610,000
2020 ²	35% of quantity BMW generated in 1995	427,000

¹ Note this capacity is for acceptance of all wastes, not just municipal waste.

Legislation and targets

Table 2 reports on the tonnage of BMW landfilled in Ireland between 2010 and 2016 and the maximum quantity to be landfilled under the Landfill Directive targets.

Table 2. BMW landfilled in Ireland 2010-2016

Year	Maximum quantity BMW to be landfilled (tonnes, rounded)	Actual quantity BMW landfilled (tonnes, rounded)
2010	916,000	860,000
2011	916,000	772,000
2012	916,000	589,000
2013	610,000	381,000
2014	610,000	276,000
2015	610,000	278,000
2016	610,000	390,000

Additional waste to energy capacity has come on-stream in 2017 with the opening of a second municipal waste incinerator in the State. If the full licensed capacity of 600,000 tonnes per annum of that incinerator is utilised from 2018 onwards, the 2015-2016 trend of increasing disposal of BMW to landfill may turn out to be short term.

Ireland must continue to divert BMW from landfill due to the importance of reducing odour nuisance, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reducing the aftercare burden of landfills.

It is very important that there is adequate treatment infrastructure in the State to manage the increasing diversion from landfill of biodegradable waste.

Further information

See <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/waste/stats/> for Excel files with the data tables and figures in this release and some additional data tables for reference.

² A derogation applies to the 2016 target. It comes into effect in 2020.