

Checking quality of recycled materials

To promote the recycling or reuse of waste construction materials, Waste and Resources Action Programme (the WRAP Protocol) has produced a Quality Protocol for recycled aggregates. The Protocol is important as it sets out standards for the manufacture of secondary (recycled) aggregates from waste. Where a producer follows the Protocol, this allows them to demonstrate that the secondary aggregates are suitable for use and comply with the relevant standards applying to the grades of materials they are supplying.

The Protocol requires that procedures are in place for the checking of wastes prior to processing to ensure they are compliant materials, then controlling the manufacturing process to ensure consistent quality of final products. If the Protocol is not followed, or if the final products do not conform to their specification, the Environment Agency and local highways authorities would regard the product as still being waste. This would mean that anyone using such products would be in effect reinstating with waste and would therefore require an environmental permit covering their use. In any event if poor quality materials are used, the reinstatement may fail to meet the Specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in Highways. This would make the use of non-compliant materials unlawful and risk costly remedial works to excavate and replace reinstated carriageway or footway.

When collecting recycled aggregates from a producer it is therefore essential that they supply the purchaser with documentation, including a description of the material, its industry specification and a statement to confirm that the aggregate was produced in accordance with the WRAP protocol. Most suppliers will provide this documentation on their collection/delivery tickets. Grab drivers should therefore check that the materials they are collecting are correctly identified on the ticket and that there is a written confirmation that they have been manufactured under the quality protocol.

When loading recycled aggregates, you should also visually check the materials to ensure that they appear to be suitable for their intended purpose. Examples of things to look out for that could suggest that the aggregate may be non-compliant would include:

- Moisture content - too wet
- Particle size - too fine or too coarse
- Presence of non-aggregate contaminants
 - such as glass, plastic, metal or organic materials.

If you suspect that the material may not be compliant, contact your line manager for advice.