Environmental Legislation

Most countries have laws that protect the environment.

In the UK, the law sets out what employers and employees must do and there are penalties for failing to comply with environmental legislation.

- **The EU Emissions Trading Scheme** covers 31 countries. It limits the total amount of certain greenhouse gases that factories, power plants and airlines are allowed to emit, and lets companies buy, sell or trade their emission allowances.
- **The Environmental Protection Act 1990** (as amended in 2008) and the **Environment Act 1995** say that anyone who produces, handles or disposes of waste must make sure it's done properly and safely. Businesses and households that don't comply can be given fines or prison sentences.
- **The Control of Pollution Act 1974** (and its 1989 Amendment) regulate waste transportation and disposal, water pollution, air pollution and noise pollution, with fines for non-compliance.

The Environment Agency was established in the UK in 1996 for England and Wales, to prevent and reduce environmental pollution, or minimise its impact, and help achieve sustainable development. The Environmental Agency is responsible for regulating industrial waste management, water quality and the treatment of contaminated land. In Scotland this function is provided by The Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

There is a range of environment-related legislation in the UK.

- **The Clean Air Act 1993** places legal limits and prohibitions on smoke, fumes, dust and grit coming from fireplaces or furnaces in homes or business properties. It also regulates the composition of fuels used in cars and other engines.
- **The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981** and the **Natural Environment and Communities Act 2006** cover the protection of native wildlife, management of non-native species, and the conservation of nature reserves, sites of specific scientific interest, and other natural environments.
- The construction industry and changes to buildings are covered by **Building Regulations** and the **Energy Performance of Buildings Directive**, and by law all large construction projects in England must have a **Site Waste Management Plan**.

This list is not exhaustive, there are **many more** laws related to environmental protection in the UK. Take some time to find out which apply to you, at home and at work, so that you can be sure you’re complying with the law.