

Guidance on assessing PAS 100 test results against SEPA plastic limits

This version of the guidance document does not introduce any technical changes from the previous version, only presentational changes.

Background

In Scotland, there is an additional mandatory requirement in respect of plastic contamination for compost outputs to meet 'end of waste status' under the Compost Certification Scheme (CCS).

Specifically, as per the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) regulatory position statement issued in 2017, the acceptable level for plastic in compost outputs is $\leq 50\%$ of the BSI PAS 100:2018 specified plastic limit (i.e., 0.06%)¹.

Table 1: Quality standards and implementation timescale

Date	Parameter	Limit
From 1 December 2018	Plastic	0.08% (66% of current PAS100)
From 1 December 2019	Plastic	0.06% (50% of current PAS100)

Have I failed against SEPA's plastic limit?

Producers (or their representatives) are required to review laboratory test results to ensure composts pass SEPA's plastic limit, as well as the PAS 100 physical contaminant and plastic limits. For example, although the below example is a pass against the PAS 100 physical contaminant and plastic limits, this is a fail against the SEPA's plastic limit of 0.06%. An example report can be found below showing a plastic result which passed the PAS limit and was reported as a 'pass' but failed the SEPA limit and therefore needs to be dealt with as a failure.

SUMMARY ~ PAS 100 "PASS" OR "FAIL"

Parameter	Result	PAS 100 upper	Unit	Pass or Fail	Method Reference (or laboratory SOP)
<i>E. coli</i>	N/D	1000	CFU/g	N/A	BS ISO 16649-2
<i>Salmonella</i> spp	N/D	Absent	Absent or Present in 25g	N/A	BS EN ISO 6579-1
Cadmium as Cd	N/D	1.50	mg/kg	N/D	BS EN 13650
Chromium as Cr	N/D	100.00	mg/kg	N/D	BS EN 13650
Copper as Cu	N/D	200.00	mg/kg	N/D	BS EN 13650
Lead as Pb	N/D	200.00	mg/kg	N/D	BS EN 13650
Mercury as Hg	N/D	1.00	mg/kg	N/D	BS EN 13650
Nickel as Ni	N/D	50.00	mg/kg	N/D	BS EN 13650
Zinc as Zn	N/D	400.00	mg/kg	N/D	BS EN 13650
CO ₂ (stability)	N/D	16.0	mg CO ₂ /g OM/d	N/A	ORG0020
Weed plants	N/D	0.0	number/l compost as received	N/A	REAL MT PRT v1
Glass, metal, plastic & other	0.25	0.25	% of 'air-dry' sample > 2 mm	Pass	REAL MT PC&S v1
Plastic	0.08	0.12		Pass	
Sharps	N/D	R		R	
Stones in "mulch"	N/D	10.0		N/D	
Stones in other than "mulch"	N/D	8.0	> 4 mm	N/D	

¹ Refer to composter's quality policy for upper limit allocated to the compost grade and intended market / end use, and evaluate sharps result against

¹ [wst-g-050-regulation-of-outputs-from-composting-processes.pdf](#)



Future review

REAL CCS are currently in the process of making changes in respect of reporting / assessing against the SEPA limit. This guidance will be updated accordingly.