



National norms and standards of storing waste safely and legally

South Africa's National Norms and Standards for the Storage of Waste, issued under the National Environmental Management: Waste Act, set out clear rules for how waste must be stored. These standards apply to anyone storing general or hazardous waste and are designed to protect health, the environment, and industry from costly penalties.

At their core, the norms ensure that waste storage facilities are safe, well-designed, and responsibly managed. They cover everything from registration and location of facilities to the construction of impermeable floors and bunding, container strength, access control, and emergency preparedness.

Weekly inspections, record-keeping, and ongoing training are also mandatory, reinforcing the principle that waste must be managed responsibly at every stage. For recyclers, this framework is not just about compliance, it is about creating a safer workplace and protecting communities. Properly stored waste reduces fire, chemical, and pollution risks, while also safeguarding the industry's reputation for professionalism.

"Understanding and applying these standards ensures recyclers operate safely, legally, and responsibly," says **Quintin Starkey**, Committee Member of the Metal Recyclers Association of South Africa (MRA). It is not just about avoiding fines; it is about building trust with communities and showing that recycling is part of the solution to South Africa's environmental challenges.

The MRA encourages members to familiarise themselves with these requirements and integrate them into daily operations. Doing so keeps people safe, ensures compliance, and strengthens the whole industry.