

## Street Works UK: Material Classification Protocol

***This document sets out the newly approved Street Works UK Material Classification Protocol and provides guidance and examples.***

### Who are Street Works UK?

Street Works UK is the trade association representing utilities and their contractors on all street works issues. Our membership comprises around 70 companies across all five utilities: water, wastewater, gas, electricity and telecoms/broadband. Our members include leading utility companies like Cadent Gas, United Utilities, National Grid, Virgin Media O2 and Openreach, with strong representation also within the devolved nations. On average the annual collective capital investment by our members in the UK is £14 billion.

### **Why the change in how utilities classify excavated waste material**

The Environment Agency requires all excavated waste to be classified before disposal / treatment. Utilities have been able to do this in two ways previously, unplanned works followed RPS 211 and Planned works followed WM3. A solution was required to better deal with waste generated from unplanned works and the Environment Agency expressed an openness to industry, through Street Works UK, developing a solution that would work for the street works sector. A risk assessment based approach was trialled by Street Works UK members and was subsequently approved by the Environment Agency for use to classify excavated waste for qualifying work.

#### **1. Qualification to use the protocol**

The following works qualify for use of the protocol.

- **Immediate Urgent**
- **Immediate Emergency**
- **Minor**
- **Standard**
- **Major Works when the permit/notice is only required due to Traffic Management purposes\***
- **Or equivalent notice periods for works on private land**

\* Major Works for traffic management purposes only relate to works that would take less than 10 days duration but a 'Major Works' permit is required due to the disruption to road users because of the works e.g. a road closure to repair an asset in the centre of a road.

## 2. Desktop Risk Assessment

Only version-controlled desktop risk assessments are to be used to ensure all users are completing the same question sets thus providing consistency across the country. A trained party completes the desktop risk assessment aligned with any company waste classification procedures. To aid completion, Street Manager holds a central register of known results which will continually be updated with results from any UKAS material classification testing.

**Utilities Excavation Waste Assessment**  
Desktop Risk Assessment

This risk assessment is to be completed before the site risk assessment is undertaken.

Site of Assessment:	<input type="checkbox"/> Public	<input type="checkbox"/> Private
Location of work:		
Address:		
Post code:		
Highways Authority:		
Works Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Immediate	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor
	<input type="checkbox"/> Major	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency (Red)
Surface location:	<input type="checkbox"/> Carriageway	<input type="checkbox"/> Footway / Pavement
	<input type="checkbox"/> Verge	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Estimated when these results:		

Table A - Central register check

Is there a previous record of this site recorded in the central register within 50m of where the site is located?

Yes  No

What is the result captured?

Unknown  Green  Red  Grey

Table B - Screening summary, risk boxes relating to the presence of certain sites within the 50m area.

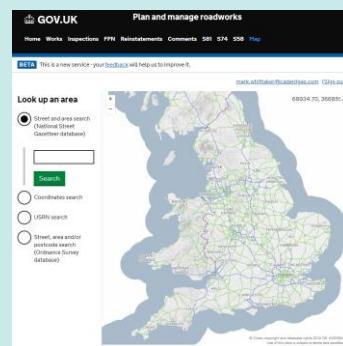
Site Type:	Answer		
	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
Industrial / Manufacturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mining (oil, gas, metal/minerals)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Petrol stations / Garages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sub stations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Waste site - Landfill & Treatment / Disposal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Waste site - Scrapyard / Metal recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Waste site - Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

Table C - Desktop risk assessment table

Site Risk  Ground Risk  Design Risk

Assessor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Rev05 Nov 2024



## 3. Site Assessment

Only version-controlled site assessments are to be used to ensure that all users are completing the same question sets thus providing consistency across the country. A trained party completes the site assessment aligned with any company waste classification procedures. Each Bituminous and Sub-base layer needs to be segregated and assessed individually on site. The use of PAK spray and Litmus paper indicators are encouraged but not mandatory. If any questions are answered 'Yes', the classification outcome for the material being assessed should be Red. Refer to guidance documents when assessing PAK and Litmus results.

**Utilities Excavation Waste Assessment**  
Site Assessment

This assessment is to be completed after opening the excavation and once relevant utility asset is exposed / ready for installation.

Utility Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Public	<input type="checkbox"/> Private
Excavation Number:		
Permit Number:		
Excavation Site Number:		
Address:		
Postcode:		
Highways Authority:		
Works Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Immediate	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor
	<input type="checkbox"/> Major	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency (Red)
Surface Location:	<input type="checkbox"/> Carriageway	<input type="checkbox"/> Footway / Pavement
	<input type="checkbox"/> Verge	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Estimated - When these results:		

Table D - Site based risk assessment table

**Answer:** **Red** **Green** **Yellow** **Grey**

Q1 Are there any signs of asbestos fibres or asbestos containing materials in the excavation?  Yes  No   
 If 'Yes' / 'Grey' asbestos are identified the excavation does not qualify for a risk assessment.

Q2 Is the soil darker, sticky to touch and is there an aromatic odour?  Yes  No   
 At three (3) sites, sticky and Crustose odour required for a 'Red'.

Q3 Is the soil darker, sticky to touch and has a strong smell of asphalt / bitumen. Does the paint appear to be worn?  Yes  No  N/A   
 At three (3) sites, sticky and Crustose odour required for a 'Red' plus day of bitumenous asphalt. Refer to PAK colour chart.

Q4 Is the soil stained an unusual colour due to the presence of oil or paint/grease?  Yes  No   
 Compare the discolouration of soil with the paint or oil of the excavation.

Q5 Is the soil wet / moisture in the excavation - is there a rainbow sheen (oil slick) on the water?  Yes  No   
 Looking for signs of oil in the excavation.

Q6 Are there any signs of water to the material?  Yes  No   
 Thin sheets, geric, egg, etc, grit, pungent, sweet smell. Refer to pH colour chart.

Q7 Does the soil feel dry or wet, does it change colour to high or low pH?  Yes  No   
 Refer to pH colour chart.

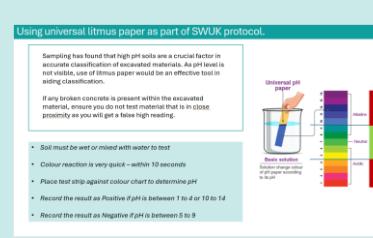
Assessment results:

Green  Red  Yellow  Grey

Comments:

Assessor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Rev05 Nov 2024



## 4. Waste Movement

The excavated waste material is ready for collection once the site assessment has been completed and the material(s) have been classified. Information on material classification must be shared with those collecting the material to ensure that Red and Green classified materials continue to be segregated from one another during transfer to a location where it will be managed (or treated).

Utilities Excavation Waste Assessment		Street Works UK																																											
Site Risk Assessment																																													
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<p><b>Street Works Example</b></p>																																													
Utility Type:	Street Works																																												
Date of Assessment:	30/12/2024																																												
Excavation Depth:	0.5m, Private																																												
Permit Number:	SW00001																																												
Work Order Ref:	SW0001/LIA																																												
Excavation Site Number:	1																																												
Address:	2 Street Works Close																																												
Post code:	SW2 2WS																																												
Engineering Authority:	Street Works Ltd																																												
Works Type:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> immediate	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor																																											
	<input type="checkbox"/> Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Major (1hr delay)																																											
	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/> Complex																																											
Surface Location:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bare ground	<input type="checkbox"/> Other																																											
Optimum - What Three Words:	Street	Works																																											
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## 5. Sampling

A percentage of work needs to be sampled to continually check the accuracy of the protocol. Samples should be taken from segregated materials as per procedures used in SWUK Phase 3 trial (refer to sampling guidance). The frequency of sampling will start at 1% for all users and is subject to change based on the accuracy performance of individual organisations each year. Sampling results must be uploaded to the central register in Street Manager and recorded in your SWUK sampling results log. Results logs should be returned to SWUK every quarter to [info@streetworks.org.uk](mailto:info@streetworks.org.uk), mark the subject of the email as “**Sample Return**” alongside your company name.

Volumes of testing will be assessed at the end of each calendar year and new sampling frequency assigned based on accuracy performance, >93% accuracy = 1% sampling, 85-92.99% accuracy = 2% sampling and <85% accuracy = 3% sampling.

## 6. Results / Performance

UKAS Results from any sampling must be uploaded into Street Managers central register. All sample results must also be added to your SWUK results log, along with the supporting assessment outcomes and details of the lab analysis including any concentrations of hazards found. Results logs must be returned to SWUK every quarter to allow accuracy of the protocol to be measured and performance shared with the EA.

Performance will be monitored by the Environment Agency and any organisations that have two combined quarters back-to-back in the Red zone will be suspended from using the protocol until they can demonstrate they can perform at the required level of accuracy. Green = >80% accuracy, Amber = 70%-79.99% accuracy and Red = <70% accuracy.

Performance Banding		2025 Q4, 2026 Q1 Combined		2026 Q1, Q2 Combined	
		Q1 EA Review	Q1 Volume of Samples	Q2 EA Review	Q2 Volume of Samples
	>80%	70.0%	10	66.7%	9
	>70-79.99%	70.0%	10	70.0%	10
	<70%	68.8%	64	75.4%	65
		66.7%	9	66.7%	9
		66.7%	9	77.8%	9
		60.0%	10	90.0%	10
		60.0%	10	60.0%	10
		60.0%	10	77.8%	9
		60.0%	10	50.0%	10

Description of file	Document Number	Document
Desktop Risk Assessment	DRA1	 DRA1_SWUK_Deskt op_Risk_Assessment
Site Assessment	SRA1	 SRA1_SWUK_ Site_Assessment 29.
Sampling Requirements	SR1	 SR1_SWUK_Samplin g_Requirements 11.
Quarterly Results Log	QRL1	<a href="http://streetworks.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/QRL1_SWUK_-Results_Capture-28.01.2026.xlsx">http://streetworks.org.uk/wp- content/uploads/2026/02/QRL1_SWUK_- Results_Capture-28.01.2026.xlsx</a>
PAK testing guidance	PAK1	 PAK1_SWUK_PAK_G uidance 21.01.2025.]
Litmus testing guidance	LIT1	 LIT1_SWUK_Litmus_ Guidance 21.01.2021
Reporting calendar	EAT1	 EAT1_SWUK_Report ing Timeline 10.01.2