

Filter Disposal

The relevant European directive is 91/689/EC Hazardous Waste.

This directive encompasses the European Waste Catalogue under which new clean filters would be classified under item 15 02 03 “absorbents, filter materials, wiping clothes and protective clothing other than those mentioned in 15 02 02” This is a non hazardous category.

However depending on the materials being lasered the fume which is collected in the filters may be considered dangerous in which case the classification changes to 15 02 02 M. This is potentially a Hazardous category depending on the amount of hazardous material in the filter and the risk it poses.

For the pre filter the risk involved would normally be R37 “Irritant to respiratory system” caused by the very fine particulate trapped in the filter. However this only becomes hazardous if more than 20% of the waste (filter plus particulate) is made up of the hazardous material which is unlikely.

PVC applications have an added dimension in that HCl is generated and in some circumstances this could potentially form an acid inside the filter which would be difficult to quantify so we recommend that the filter is treated as a hazardous waste with a potential R34 Corrosive risk.

The combined filter needs to be considered in the same way. The risks being different for different materials. Most applications will be non hazardous because the % of any hazardous material is likely to be below the threshold level.

Again for PVC and other polymers which generate highly toxic gasses it is safest to treat the filters as hazardous waste with a toxic risk.