

Disposal of toxic waste

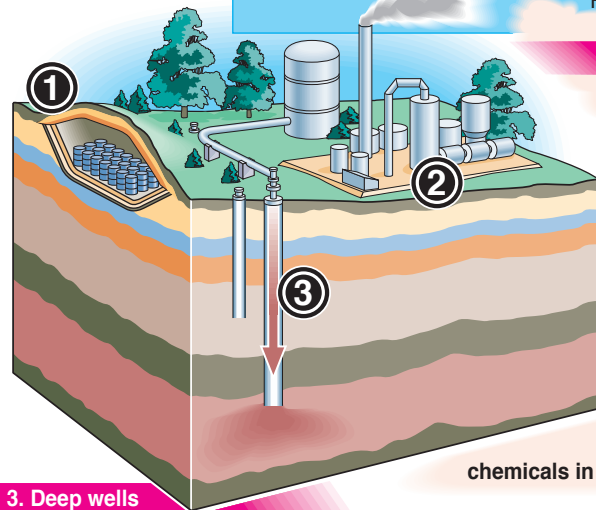
Environment secretary Michael Howard has asked the German government to ban a shipment of 1,400 tonnes of highly toxic waste due to be burnt by ReChem International at their high-temperature incinerator near Pontypool

The waste – from a Hamburg pesticide plant which made the defoliant Agent Orange – is believed to be contaminated with dioxins, chemicals known to cause cancer in animal tests

1. Containment

Landfills with clay liners up to 5 metres thick stop leakage into the water table

Risk: liners can be damaged by industrial solvents



3. Deep wells

Waste is injected between rock layers up to a mile underground

Risk: chemicals can spread slowly into the groundwater

Toxic waste incinerators

Renfrew: Caird

Teesside, Seal Sands:

Cory Environmental,
planning permission granted

Merseyside, Ellesmere Port:

Cleanaway


Sheffield: Leigh

Environmental

Pontypool:

ReChem International

Southampton:
ReChem International

Proposed 

Existing 

Humber-side, Saltend: ITE

2. Incineration

Waste is burnt at more than 1,100 degrees centigrade

Combustion:

correct burn-time, temperature and mixing of the waste with oxygen destroys over 99.9% of waste

Risk: incomplete combustion can leave highly toxic dioxins and other chemicals in the ash and smoke