



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

GUIDANCE, DOCUMENT

Find disused coal tips: frequently asked questions

Answers to common questions about disused coal tips in Wales.

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Coal tip safety

Coal tips are a legacy of Wales' mining past. Making sure our communities are safe has always been and continues to be the Welsh Government's top priority. In 2020, we set up a coal tip safety programme, working with local authorities, Natural Resources Wales, and the Coal Authority.

The programme is taking forward a wide range of work, including gathering information about where disused coal tips are located in Wales. This information is helping us to plan a regular inspection schedule and to carry out maintenance works – routine work to ensure disused coal tips are safe. We are also exploring the use of new technology to monitor them.

We believe it is important people know where these disused coal tips are and have published maps showing where they are located across Wales.

Definition of a disused coal tip

A coal tip is made up of waste material from coal mining. The coal tips we are dealing with are called disused coal tips, because they are no longer linked to any mining activities or a mine. Many of these disused coal tips have existed for decades and some for longer than that.

What category C or D means and are these tips safe

The Welsh Government is committed to keeping communities safe. Category C or D means these disused coal tips need to be inspected more often, so we can identify and carry out any maintenance when needed. It does not mean they are unsafe, but they may be larger and are more likely to be close to communities/ infrastructure.

We have asked the Coal Authority to inspect category C coal tips once a year and category D coal tips twice a year.

Disused coal tips are also categorised as category A, B and R coal tips. Category A and B coal tips do not need frequent inspections.

Full category descriptors

Category D

A tip with the potential to impact public safety, to be inspected at least twice a year.

Category C

A tip with the potential to impact public safety, to be inspected at least once a year.

Category B

A tip with the unlikely potential to impact public safety.

Category A

A tip with the very unlikely potential to impact public safety.

Category R

A tip with the very unlikely potential to impact public safety. Potentially removed or levelled and often built over.

The number of disused coal tips in Wales

There are more than 2,573 disused coal tips in Wales.

For more information on numbers and categories of disused coal tips see [Coal tip safety](#).

What to do if you have concerns about a tip

If you have any concerns you'd like to report, [contact us](#).

What happens if a tip slips

The local authority is likely to be the lead public body in responding to any tip slip.

We would ask the Coal Authority to support the local authority and, on some occasions, Natural Resources Wales may also provide support.

The disused coal tips have been there for many decades and the regular inspection programme is designed to ensure any changes are identified early.

Should you have any concerns then [contact us](#).

Data release

We have now published maps containing the locations of all disused coal tips across Wales.

The boundaries of disused coal tips provided in the map have been based on a range of information from different sources including from historic maps and airborne surveys. It is a 'live' dataset and may be subject to amendment as more information becomes available.

Why we are publishing this information

The purpose of publishing the data is to provide information on the location of disused coal tips in Wales.

Zooming in on maps

Tip boundaries are visible up to a scale of 1:25,000. This is considered the best scale to show locations of tips in the context of their local area within existing copyright constraints.

The map boundaries are based on a range of information including from historic maps and airborne surveys. It is a 'live' dataset and may be subject to amendment as more information becomes available.

If you have problems getting the map to work

Our online digital web maps of the disused coal tips are expected to be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If the map does not work, you may wish to check

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your internet connection and/or use a different internet browser. If the problems persist it could be due to an unexpected outage of the service or that traffic on the site is high, so you could try again later on. If the problems persist, [contact us](#).

Reasons why a disused tip might not be in the published data

If you know about a disused tip but it is not in the published data, this may be because the tip is not a coal tip.

If you have concerns, [contact us](#).

Inspections and maintenance

We have commissioned the Coal Authority to inspect all Category C and D coal tips annually.

Category C coal tips are now inspected once a year and Category D coal tips are inspected twice a year.

Category B tips have the unlikely potential to impact public safety but inspections on these tips are underway.

Many local authorities and Natural Resources Wales inspect their coal tips as well as the Coal Authority.

A number of the category C and D disused coal tips are captured in our technology trials, which enables on-going monitoring of a coal tip.

What to do if you have had a letter saying someone is coming to inspect a disused coal tip

The Coal Authority or local authority may write to inform you that they need to inspect your coal tip if your land or property is situated on it. If you receive one of these letters, we ask that you allow access to your land to enable an inspection to take place.

It is important that these bodies can inspect tips on a regular basis and your support in helping us to ensure the safety of tips, is greatly appreciated.

When a disused tip needs an inspection

The Coal Authority or your local authority will contact you in writing if an inspection is required.

Funding for maintenance works

We have made £44.4m available to local authorities to carry out routine works on public and privately-owned coal tips between 2022-2025.

Health

If you have questions about you or your family's health

The disused coal tips in Wales have been there for many decades and the regular inspection programme is designed to ensure any changes in terms of the structure or make up of the land are identified early. Should you have any

concerns then [contact us](#).

If you have concerns about pollution and disused coal tips

The pollutant risk with disused coal tips themselves is generally low. However, this is complex and would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Should you have any health-related concerns related to a specific tip please get in touch via our [contact pages](#).

Property

If you have questions about house prices and insurance premiums

Coal tips have been present for many decades and some for centuries. The publication of their location does not change this. The key change is that there is now a dedicated programme in place to monitor and maintain these coal tips.

Category C and D coal tips are now being regularly inspected - we have asked the Coal Authority to inspect category C tips once a year and category D tips twice a year. The current round of winter inspections began on 9 October. We have also made £44.4m available to local authorities to carry out routine works on public and privately-owned coal tips. Making sure our communities are safe has always been and continues to be the Welsh Government's top priority – and this includes homes.

We recognise the release of data in relation to disused coal tip locations may raise concerns on the potential impact on house prices and insurance premiums.

We are working closely with the insurance and mortgage industries to ensure they are kept up to date with our work.

Future legislation

The Welsh Government published its proposals for a new regulatory regime in May 2022 in the [Coal Tip Safety \(Wales\) White Paper](#). The proposals built upon recommendations made by the Law Commission. A summary of the responses was published in November 2022.

Subject to Ministerial agreement, Welsh Government will introduce legislation for a long-term, sustainable and fit for purpose regulatory regime for disused tip safety, led by a newly created public body solely focused on this work in Autumn 2024.

To receive regular updates on the Coal Tip Safety programme, including on the progress of the Bill, [contact us](#).

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For more information refer to our [accessibility statement](#).

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