

Jail sentence for illegal dumping proposed

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KUALA LUMPUR: Anyone disposing of toxic waste in unauthorised areas could soon risk a mandatory jail sentence.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Azmi Khalid said an amendment to the Environmental Quality Act 1974 would be proposed to this effect.

"Many contractors dump their waste anywhere they like as they

refuse to go to designated disposal sites where they have to pay," he said, adding that there were contractors hired by factories, who made arrangements with estate owners to bury waste in their land.

Azmi said stern punishment should be legislated to prevent such illegal activities, as offenders tended to get off lightly by paying fines.

He said the more than 40 open

landfills nationwide to be closed were located near water catchments.

"A safe closure will be carried out to prevent leachate from flowing into rivers and polluting water sources," he said, adding that new sites for sanitary landfills, refuse-derived fuel systems or incinerators would be opened to replace the landfills being closed.