

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Environmental Fact Sheet

TREATMENT STANDARDS SET FOR TOXICITY CHARACTERISTIC (TC) METAL WASTES, MINERAL PROCESSING WASTES, AND CONTAMINATED SOIL

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is publishing regulatory controls that encourage the safe recycling and disposal of hazardous metal waste, and newly identified waste from mineral processing.

Background

The widespread practice of disposing of hazardous waste in units located directly on the land has been regulated by EPA's Land Disposal Restrictions (LDR) program for many years. A major part of the LDR program is to adequately protect public health and safety by establishing treatment standards for hazardous wastes before they can be disposed of in land disposal units. These treatment standards either specify that the waste be treated by a specified technology, or that they be treated by any technology as long as the concentration of hazardous constituents is below a certain level. Universal Treatment Standards specify the concentration levels for hazardous constituents.

In addition to setting new treatment standards, another continuing task of the EPA is to better define which industrial materials are wastes, thus subject to regulation, and which should be excluded from regulation.

Action

LDR treatment standards are established for metal-bearing wastes—including TC waste (those with high levels of metal constituents)—and waste generated in mineral processing operations. These standards are based on the best technologies available to treat these or similar wastes. The UTS for 12 metal constituents is revised to better reflect the entire universe of wastes that are subject to the treatment standards. Consequently, listed and characteristic hazardous wastes containing one or more metal constituents may have to comply with new treatment standards.

Hazardous waste regulations are modified to define which secondary materials from mineral processing are considered waste, and thus subject to LDR treatment standards. Materials that are legitimately recycled and kept off the land prior to recycling are conditionally excluded. These provisions promote the safe recycling of mineral processing secondary materials by reducing regulatory obstacles to recycling, while ensuring the proper treatment and disposal of hazardous wastes. Other miscellaneous issues related to mineral processing wastes also are covered. In particular, the Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure is retained as a test for evaluating the toxicity characteristic in these wastes.

EPA is also amending the LDR treatment standards for soil contaminated with hazardous waste. These standards are tailored to be more appropriate for soils to make it more feasible to clean up contaminated sites without using combustion technologies. Finally, EPA is excluding from regulation certain wastewaters from wood preserving operations.

For More Information

The *Federal Register* notice is available in electronic format on the Internet at <[www.epa.gov/laws and regulations](http://www.epa.gov/laws_and_regulations)>. This fact sheet and other documents related to this rule are available at <[www.epa.gov/osw/treat, store, and dispose of waste](http://www.epa.gov/osw/treat_store_and_dispose_of_waste)>. For additional information or to order paper copies of any documents, call the RCRA Hotline. Callers within the Washington Metropolitan Area must dial 703-412-9810 or TDD 703-412-3323 (hearing impaired). Long-distance callers may call 1-800-424-9346 or TDD 1-800-553-7672. The RCRA Hotline operates weekdays, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Write to the RCRA Information Center (5305W), US EPA, 401 M Street, SW, Washington, DC 20460.