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Wastewater Treatment Exemptions for Certain Hazardous Waste Mixtures

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is taking steps to provide flexible and environmentally sound regulatory management by expanding the Wastewater Treatment Exemptions for Hazardous Waste Mixtures. These risk-based exemptions will result in net cost savings for affected industries and fully protect human health and the environment.

Action

EPA is finalizing revisions to the Wastewater Treatment Exemptions for Hazardous Waste Mixtures, also known as the “Headworks Rule,” originally proposed on April 8, 2003. Headworks Rule exemptions are a part of the Subtitle C, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) that regulate hazardous waste. This rule determines which methods of managing hazardous waste mixtures produce discharges that can safely be handled under nonhazardous waste standards.

Wastewater treatment systems receive many different kinds of waste. In certain instances, these wastes are a miniscule and treatable part of the wastewater mixture. Because the relatively small volume of these wastes can be easily and effectively handled by the wastewater treatment system, EPA is taking the following action.

- Adding two solvents (benzene and 2-ethoxyethanol) to a list of solvents whose mixtures are exempted from the definition of hazardous waste;
- Adding an option to directly measure solvent chemical levels at the headworks of the wastewater treatment system;
- Exempting scrubber waters generated from the incineration of spent solvents from hazardous waste management; and
- Making listed hazardous waste (beyond discarded commercial chemical products) eligible for RCRA *de minimus* exemption as well as allowing nonmanufacturing facilities to qualify for the *de minimus* exemption.

For More Information

This fact sheet and other documents are available on the Internet at:
<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/id/headworks/index.htm>. Find answers to additional questions at <http://waste.custhelp.com>.