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Hazardous Waste Manifest System Streamlined

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is improving and modernizing the hazardous waste tracking system by standardizing the Uniform Hazardous Waste Manifest form. Standardizing the form streamlines the waste handling process, helps interstate commerce, and reduces regulatory paperwork. A streamlined process will save waste handlers and regulators time and money, while guaranteeing the continued, safe management of hazardous waste. EPA estimates the annual national burden reduction to be between \$12 and \$ 20 million.

Action

The hazardous waste Manifest forms:

- Are standardized in content and appearance.
- Enhance reporting of international waste shipments (imports and exports).
- Are available from a wide range of sources.
- Clarify processing procedures for rejected waste shipments and shipment container residues.

The new system reduces or eliminates many of the variabilities in state manifest requirements. For example, the new Manifest form uses check boxes and adds fields to better track “difficult” shipments, such as container residues, rejected wastes, and transboundary shipments.

The standard Manifest forms will be printed according to a precise specification to assure uniformity. Each form will carry a unique preprinted manifest tracking number. This change allows waste handlers with multi-state operations to register and use their own manifest forms everywhere they do business. EPA still has oversight of the registration process. Recordkeeping, reporting requirements, and other changes streamline and vastly improve hazardous waste tracking. The same Manifest form will be used by every jurisdiction beginning in 18 months.

Background

For more than 20 years, hazardous waste generators and transporters have been required to use the Uniform Hazardous Waste Manifest system. The Manifest form provides a complete paper trail of a waste’s progress from a generator through treatment, storage, and disposal. It identifies the type and quantity of the hazardous waste being shipped, and contains a generator’s certification of waste minimization practices. Each waste handler must return a copy of the Manifest to the generator. A missing form alerts a generator to investigate and find the waste. If the waste cannot be found, then the generator notifies either EPA or the state agency for appropriate action.

In May 2001, the Agency also proposed to make the manifest tracking form electronic. The Agency is working to resolve significant technological issues that arose during the comment period. Consequently, the e-manifest will be addressed in a future rule. The e-manifest remains a high priority for the Agency because it accounts for much of the annual burden reduction cost savings estimated for the original proposed rule (67 to 79 percent), and because it will greatly improve the effectiveness of hazardous waste tracking.

The regulations for hazardous waste generators and transporters in 40 CFR Parts 262-263 are affected by this proposal. Related requirements for owners and operators of treatment, storage, and disposal facilities in Parts 264-265 are also affected, along with state requirements in Part 271.

Impact

More than 139,000 businesses in approximately 45 industries will receive regulatory relief from this rule. These businesses ship approximately 12 million tons of hazardous wastes annually, and use between 2 and 5 million Hazardous Waste Manifests. In addition, at least 34 state governments reportedly spend between \$6 and \$37 million a year to administer the hazardous waste manifest system. EPA estimates the annual change in paperwork burden resulting from the this rule will save states and industry between \$12 and \$20 million.

For More Information

Please visit us on the Internet at: <<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/gener/manifest/index.htm>> or at: <www.epa.gov/osw>.