

Hazardous Waste Decoded

Information And Policy Updates On Hazardous Waste Management

December 2023

Hazardous Waste Rule Update

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is proposing updates to several areas of the current state hazardous waste regulations found in chs. NR 600-679, Wis. Adm. Code. These modifications are intended to improve certain aspects of the rules pertaining to the management of hazardous wastes while continuing to protect public health and the environment.

The goals of the updates are to:

- Capture several recent federal hazardous waste rule revisions,
- Modify and clarify existing state hazardous waste regulations, and
- Incorporate technical corrections to existing regulations.

Access Hazardous Waste Rulemaking Information

The DNR's [new webpage on hazardous waste rules and statutes](#) includes a list of current administrative code and statutes, proposed rules, the rule process and instructions for submitting comments and links to additional information.

What The Rule Changes Entail

Modernizing Ignitable Liquid Determinations

The proposed rules would allow the DNR to capture recently modified federal hazardous waste regulations.

The revisions include:

- Allowing for additional, modernized flash point test methods relating to ignitable hazardous waste determinations.
- Clarifying the definition of "aqueous solution."
- Correcting cross references to U.S. Department of Transportation regulations.
- Removing obsolete information in the current ignitability regulations.

The revisions would likely have some positive economic impact on certified labs, environmental consulting services, hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal facilities and all regulated classes of hazardous waste generators that conduct testing activities to determine the ignitability characteristics of certain wastes. The reduced use of mercury thermometers will also benefit human health and the environment.

Expanding Universal Waste Regulations

Universal wastes are specific hazardous wastes that are generated in high volumes by both industry and households. These waste streams can be managed under streamlined regulations that can both improve recycling and ensure proper waste handling.

Currently, there are four universal waste streams in Wisconsin:

- Used lamps (light bulbs)
- Used batteries
- Used mercury-containing equipment
- Recalled or expired pesticides

The proposed rulemaking would evaluate the potential addition of aerosol cans as a new universal waste in Wisconsin. The addition of aerosol cans as a universal waste would streamline regulations and potentially increase recycling options for these materials. In addition, the rule would clarify existing requirements pertaining to universal waste destination facilities and the management of used lamps.

Technical Corrections And Clarifications

The DNR is proposing a rule to correct and clarify state regulations, which may include errors identified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, along with additional spelling errors, citation errors and missing federal code language. These corrections would eliminate inconsistencies between the state and federal hazardous waste regulations.

Hazardous Waste Guidance Document Update

The DNR is updating and adding new hazardous waste guidance documents to the DNR's website. These documents contain information pertaining to the management of hazardous wastes. The guidance documents include changes in regulation, clarification of subject matter and template attachments to comply with recordkeeping requirements.

Guidance documents pertaining to the management of used antifreeze are currently being updated. Used antifreeze is considered a used oil in Wisconsin and should no longer be managed as a universal waste.

- Containers must be labeled "used oil" but the word "antifreeze" can be added to differentiate used antifreeze from other used oils.
- To facilitate recycling, do not mix used antifreeze with other used oils.

Guidance documents can be accessed on the [DNR's Hazardous Waste Resources webpage](#) under the "Guidance" tab.

Stay Updated

More information on hazardous waste management can be found on the [DNR's hazardous waste overview page](#). New or substantially edited guidance documents can be found on the DNR's Waste and Materials Management Program's [announcements and public comment opportunities page](#).

In addition to Hazardous Waste Decoded, the DNR provides [subscription email lists](#) on other waste-related topics:

- The Compost Post
- Electronics Recycling Updates
- Healthcare Waste News
- Recycling Updates
- Solid Waste News