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School Chemicals and Disposal

This guidance document has been produced by the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (DWEE) to assist schools, colleges, and universities in managing and disposing of chemicals. The regulations applying to this topic can be found in Nebraska [Title 128 – Hazardous Waste Regulations](#).

Inventory of Chemicals

Prepare an inventory of all chemicals that will be disposed of. The inventory should include the chemical names, Chemical Abstract Service (CAS) numbers, and approximate weight of each chemical. Weights should be recorded using a consistent unit of measurement.

The inventory should be performed by someone familiar with handling chemicals. Use appropriate personal protective equipment such as goggles, gloves, face shield, and smock when doing the inventory. Do not allow students to perform the physical inventory. If explosive or reactive chemicals are found, do not handle or move them. Do not attempt to remove the cap from these chemicals. Contact the Nebraska State Patrol for assistance with these chemicals. Unknown chemicals must be identified. If they cannot be identified, they may need to be laboratory tested to confirm their identity. All unknown chemicals should be assumed to be dangerous until proven otherwise.

Identify Hazardous Waste

Determine which materials are hazardous waste according to Title 128. These include:

- Materials that contain a toxic chemical listed in Title 128, Chapter 3, Table 3
- F-listed hazardous waste from a nonspecific source in Title 128, Chapter 3, Table 4
- U-listed toxic chemicals in Title 128, Chapter 3, Table 7
- Materials that exhibit a characteristic of ignitability, corrosivity, or reactivity described in Title 128, Chapter 3, [§007 – 009](#)
- P-listed acutely hazardous waste in Title 128, Chapter 2, Table 6. For materials to be p-listed waste, the listed chemical must be the sole active ingredient.

Refer to the DWEE Guidance Document titled "Waste Determinations and Hazardous Waste Testing" for more information on identifying hazardous waste.

Radioactive Materials

Not all radioactive materials are labeled to indicate that they are radioactive, especially if they are older. Look for materials containing known radioactive elements such as uranium, thorium, and radium. Minerals such as uraninite, autunite, brannerite, and monazite contain naturally occurring radiation. Contact the Office of Radiological Health at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for information on disposal of radioactive materials.

Hazardous Waste Generator Status

Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generators (CESQGs) generate 100 kg (220 lbs.) or less of hazardous waste per month. Refer to the DWEE Guidance Document titled "Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generators" for more information on CESQG requirements.

Small Quantity Generators (SQGs) generate between 100 – 1,000 kg (220 – 2,200 lbs.) of hazardous waste per month.

Large Quantity Generators (LQGs) generate 1,000 kg (2,200 lbs.) or more of hazardous waste per month. If the amount of p-listed waste to be discarded is more than 1 kg (2.2 lbs.), the generator will be a LQG regardless of the amount of non-p-listed waste generated.

Refer to the DWEE Guidance Document titled "Comparison of Hazardous Waste Generator Requirements" for more information on specific generator category requirements including storage and accumulation requirements.

Disposal of Waste

Some liquid and dissolved solid waste, such as acids and bases, may be treated or neutralized and be disposed of down the drain only if the system flows to a public wastewater treatment facility. Contact the facility to obtain permission before disposing of chemicals to the sanitary sewer. Ignitable waste should never be poured down the drain and incompatible chemicals should never be mixed.

Liquid waste is not allowed to be disposed of at a landfill and must be disposed of at a commercial facility if it cannot be disposed of to the sanitary sewer. Non-hazardous liquid inorganic mixtures may be evaporated as a means of disposal. Non-hazardous liquids may also be bulked with sorbents and disposed of in a landfill. CESQGs may bulk hazardous liquids with sorbents to dispose of in a landfill. However, once the sorbent is mixed in, all of the material considered hazardous waste and will count towards the monthly generation total. Hazardous waste is never allowed to be evaporated as a means of disposal. Elemental mercury is hazardous and should never be disposed of in a landfill.

Hazardous waste may be disposed of at a permitted Treatment, Storage, or Disposal Facility (TSDF). CESQGs may dispose of up to 43 pounds of hazardous waste in a permitted municipal solid waste landfill per day. Assistance with disposal costs may be available through grant programs offered by your Educational Service Unit or Keep Nebraska Beautiful's School Chemical Cleanout Campaign.

RESOURCES:

- DWEE Home Page <https://dwee.nebraska.gov/>
- DHHS Radioactive Materials Page <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Radioactive-Control-Materials.aspx>
- Keep Nebraska Beautiful Home Page <https://www.knb.org/>

Contacts:

- DWEE Main Number (402) 471-2186
- DWEE Toll Free Number (877) 253-2603
- DWEE Hazardous Waste Compliance Assistant (402) 471-8308
- Email questions to: DWEE.moreinfo@nebraska.gov

DWEE Publications:

- Environmental Guidance Document – “Waste Determinations and Hazardous Waste Testing”
- Environmental Guidance Document – “Comparison of Hazardous Waste Generator Requirements”
- Environmental Guidance Document – “Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generators”
Guidance documents are available on the DWEE website by clicking “Visit Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (DEE),” selecting “Forms,” and “Publications, Grants & Forms.”
- [Title 128 – Nebraska Hazardous Waste Regulations](#)
Titles are available on the DWEE website by clicking “Visit Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (DEE),” selecting “Resources and Services,” “Laws & Regulations,” and “Rules & Regulations.”

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