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Hazardous Waste Containers

This guidance document has been produced by the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (DWEE) to provide guidance on the regulatory requirements for managing hazardous waste storage containers. This guidance is applicable to Large Quantity Generators (LQGs) and Small Quantity Generators (SQGs) that are storing hazardous waste in containers. Among the most common violations cited during inspections are hazardous waste containers that are not correctly closed, labeled, or dated. The regulations applying to this topic can be found in Nebraska [Title 128 – Hazardous Waste Regulations](#). A “container” means any *portable* device in which a material is stored, transported, treated, disposed of, or otherwise handled.

This document applies only to hazardous waste storage containers and does not include guidance on used oil storage, universal waste storage, or tank requirements.

Container Labeling and Dating

Each container containing hazardous waste must be labeled or marked with the words “Hazardous Waste” and identification of the contents. Note that the label must indicate that the contents are a waste. The label must be legible and in good condition. If it is torn or becomes difficult to read, replace it.

A container within the Central Accumulation Area must be labeled or marked with the accumulation start date. This is the date that waste is first added to the storage container within the Central Accumulation Area or the date that a satellite accumulation container becomes full. Satellite containers within the designated satellite accumulation area are not required to be dated while they contain less than 55 gallons of (nonacute) hazardous waste.

Conditions of Containers

Each container must:

- Be in good condition (no deep creases, dents, rust, corrosion, etc.)
- Have adequate strength and integrity to contain the waste

Please be aware that each container must meet the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) packaging standards when shipped off-site.

To minimize the potential for spills, releases, and volatile air emissions, each container storing or accumulating hazardous waste must be closed, except when actively adding or removing waste. Containers must be closed in a way that prevents the escape of vapors and prevents the release of the contents if a container is tipped or knocked over.

Compatible Containers

Each container must be compatible with the hazardous waste to be placed in the container in order to ensure that the ability of the container to contain the hazardous waste is not compromised. Therefore, the container must be made of, or lined with, a material that is compatible and nonreactive to the waste stored. For example, acid waste must not be stored in a metal container without an appropriate liner because the acid may corrode the metal, releasing the hazardous waste.

A storage container that contains hazardous waste that is incompatible with any other waste or material stored nearby must be separated from the other materials by a dike, berm, wall, or other device.

Storage of Containers

LQGs and SQGs are required to maintain aisle space to “allow the unobstructed movement of personnel, fire protection equipment, spill control equipment, and decontamination equipment to any area of the facility operation in an emergency, unless it can be demonstrated to the State Fire Marshal that aisle space is not needed for any of these purposes.”

For LQGs, containers holding ignitable or reactive wastes must be located at least 50 feet (15 meters) from the facility’s property line.

Inspections

Inspecting the areas where hazardous waste containers are stored helps the generator identify containers that might be leaking, or are otherwise in poor condition, before hazardous waste is released to the environment. LQGs and SQGs are required to conduct weekly inspections of each area where hazardous waste storage containers are located. All inspections must include, but should not be limited to, a check for any container deterioration and leaks. Other items to look for during weekly inspections include proper labeling and dating of containers, and how long the waste has been stored. Documentation of inspections is not required but is highly encouraged.

Satellite Accumulation

LQGs and SQGs may use satellite accumulation containers. Each satellite accumulation container must be at or near the point of generation and under the control of the operator. DWEE does not limit the number of satellite accumulation areas where a generator can accumulate its hazardous waste.

The total quantity of an individual waste stream in the satellite area cannot exceed 55 gallons of non-acute hazardous waste, or one quart of acute hazardous waste. The holding capacity of the container is not limited but may be greater than 55 gallons. For example, an 85-gallon container may be used as long as no more than 55 gallons are placed in it.

Once the 55-gallon capacity is exceeded, the container must either be emptied, or dated within 3 days and moved to the facility's Central Accumulation Area.

Empty Containers

"RCRA empty" is a phrase that is used to refer to a container whose contents (residues) are so minimal that they are no longer subject to RCRA regulation. As a result, the container, with the residue, may be disposed of as a solid waste or recycled. The "RCRA empty" criteria depends on the type of waste that was held in the container.

For containers that held hazardous wastes (except for acute hazardous wastes or compressed gases), a container or inner liner is considered empty if all wastes have been removed that can be removed using methods commonly used for that type of container (e.g., pouring, pumping, and aspirating), and:

- No more than 1 inch (2.5 cm) of residue remains on the bottom of the container or inner liner.

OR

- No more than 3%, by weight, of the total capacity of the container remains in the container or inner liner if the container is less than or equal to 119 gallons in size.

OR

- No more than 0.3%, by weight, of the total capacity of the container remains in the container or inner liner if the container is greater than 119 gallons in size.

For containers that held an acute hazardous waste, a container or inner liner is considered empty if:

- The container or inner liner has been triple rinsed using a solvent capable of removing the acute hazardous waste.

OR

- The container or inner liner has been cleaned by another method that has been shown in scientific literature, or by tests conducted by the generator, to achieve equivalent removal.

OR

- In the case of a container, the inner liner that prevented contact of the acute hazardous waste has been removed from the container.

Containers that held pesticides are subject to Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) under the Nebraska Department of Agriculture and may require triple rinsing prior to disposal, even if it meets "RCRA empty" standards. Consult the material's safety data sheet (SDS) or the Department of Agriculture for proper disposal under FIFRA.

For containers that held a hazardous waste that was a compressed gas, the container is considered empty when the pressure in the container approaches atmospheric pressure.

RESOURCES:

- DWEE Home Page <https://dwee.nebraska.gov/>
- Nebraska Department of Agriculture Home Page <https://nda.nebraska.gov/>

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:

- [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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