

Conditional Exclusion and Conditional Exemption for Certain Hazardous Contaminated Towels/Rags

Proposed Rule
68 FR 65586-65618
November 20, 2003

What is this Federal Register About?

This is a proposed rule.

This proposed rule will affect hazardous solvent-contaminated industrial towels/rags sent to both landfill and non-landfill facilities (for example, laundries and combustion facilities). When certain conditions are met, the proposal excludes or exempts solvent-contaminated industrial towels/rags from many of the requirements under the hazardous waste rules. This proposed rule does not affect or apply to absorbent materials such as pigs, pads, and granular material.

Specifically, U.S. EPA proposes to conditionally exclude from the definition of solid waste reusable industrial shop towels and rags that are contaminated with hazardous waste solvents and can no longer be used or reused without laundering or dry cleaning. Exclusion conditions include: the requirement to meet accumulation standards, the presence of no free liquids in the wipes and the use of Department of Transportation (DOT) containers for off-site shipments.

U.S. EPA also proposes to conditionally exempt from the definition of hazardous waste disposable industrial towels/wipes that are contaminated with certain hazardous waste solvents that are either disposed of by landfilling or some non-land based method (for example, combustion). Applicable conditions for towels/wipes disposed of by a non-land based disposal method include: accumulation standard requirements, absences of free liquids in the wipes, labeling requirements and the use of DOT containers for off-site shipments. Applicable conditions for wipes that are disposed of by landfilling include: accumulation standard requirements, meeting the "dry" standard (i.e., towel/wipe contains less than 5 g of solvent); wipe does not contain an ineligible solvent, labeling requirements and the use of DOT containers for off-site shipments.

There are 11 solvents that are ineligible to be disposed of in a nonhazardous waste landfill. They are: 2-nitropropane, nitrobenzene, methyl ethyl ketone (MEK), methylene chloride, pyridine, benzene, cresols (o,m,p) carbon tetrachloride, chlorobenzene, tetrachloroethylene and trichloroethylene.

What does this mean to the regulated community?

This rule would likely affect the following industries: printers, chemical manufacturers, equipment/vehicle repair, electronic manufacturers, publishing, metal fabricating companies and plastics/rubber manufacturers. This rule would not cause any of the regulated community to be newly subject to hazardous waste permitting.

Currently, in Ohio, hazardous solvent contaminated towels/rags are not defined as a solid waste and therefore, are not subject to regulation under the hazardous waste rules if the towels/rags are washed and reused. So, if the rule is finalized and adopted, it would mean that such hazardous solvent contaminated towels/rags would be subject to some regulation under the hazardous waste rules.

However, some hazardous solvent contaminated towels/rags that are disposed of will

be subject to less stringent regulation under the hazardous waste rules than they are today. Presently, if disposable towels/rags are contaminated with a listed hazardous waste solvent or exhibit the ignitability characteristic, they are defined as a hazardous waste and must be disposed according to the hazardous waste rules (e.g., hazardous waste combustion or disposal at a hazardous waste landfill).

Will Ohio EPA be commenting on this Federal Register?

Yes.

Federal Register Link

<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/id/solvents/wipes-fr.pdf>

Federal Guidance Document:

<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/id/solvents/wipes.htm>