

Technical Brief

Solvent-Contaminated Wipes

Many facilities use wipes (shop towels, rags, pads, etc.) to perform cleaning and maintenance or absorb spilled materials. If a wipe is used with a flammable, toxic or corrosive solvent, it may become a hazardous waste when disposed or recycled. It is important that facilities properly collect, handle, store and dispose of these solvent-contaminated wipes if they contain hazardous materials.

Effective 01/31/2014, the EPA amended the hazardous waste regulations at 40 CFR Parts 260 & 261 to exclude certain solvent-contaminated wipes from being classified as a hazardous waste. Details of this change are below:

What qualifies for the exemption? (qualifying wipes)

- ✿ Wipes containing one or more F001 – F005 listed solvents (or the corresponding P- or U- listed solvents) such as acetone, methanol, tetrachloroethylene or toluene -OR-
- ✿ Wipes that exhibit only the hazardous characteristic of ignitability (flashpoint < 140°F)

What conditions must be met?

- ✿ Waste wipes must be stored in non-leaking, closed containers
- ✿ Containers must be labeled “Excluded Solvent-Contaminated Wipes”
- ✿ Waste wipes may not be accumulated / stored for more than 180 days
- ✿ Wipes and their storage containers may not contain free liquids when ready for transport
- ✿ Any free liquids removed from containers must be managed as hazardous waste

What records must be kept?

- ✿ Name and address of laundry, dry cleaner, landfill or combustor
- ✿ Documentation that the 180-day accumulation time limit is being met
- ✿ Description of process used to meet the ‘no free liquids’ condition

What are the benefits of this rule?

- ✿ Qualifying wipes that are sent for disposal are not considered hazardous wastes. (NOTE – wipes contaminated with trichloroethylene / TCE are not eligible for the exclusion when disposed)
- ✿ Qualifying wipes that are sent for laundering and re-use are not considered solid wastes.
- ✿ Qualifying wipes do not count towards a facility’s hazardous waste generation quantity for purposes of generator status determination.
- ✿ Qualifying wipes do not require a hazardous waste manifest.
- ✿ Qualifying wipes do not need to be reported on hazardous waste reports

Although this rule was approved by the EPA, most states have their own hazardous waste regulations and will need to amend their state rules to incorporate this change. As of the date of this document, Alaska, Florida, Iowa, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Virginia have adopted this amendment. Other states are likely to do so soon. Contact your state environmental agency for more information.

CRC has your Solution

CRC publishes Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) for all of our products and they are readily available on our website. These SDSs include specific waste classifications as well as other very valuable information to help you assess which environmental regulations may affect our products and your business. For SDSs, other technical briefs and additional regulatory resources, visit CRC’s website at www.crcindustries.com.

For more information, contact CRC Technical Services at 800-521-3168.