

HAZARDOUS WASTE MANAGEMENT

2006 REPORT

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The State of North Carolina requires that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) develop a comprehensive hazardous waste management plan every two years. The first plan was completed in July 1, 1990; the latest plan was completed in 2006. Beginning October 1, 2003, the Department was also required to make an annual report on the hazardous waste management plan per GS 130A – 294(i). This report includes an evaluation of hazardous waste management in North Carolina and identifies DENR's activities and recommendations in the following areas: improving waste management; cleaning up of hazardous waste; reducing the amount of waste generated; minimizing the amount of hazardous waste which must be disposed of; and maximizing resource recovery, reuse and conservation.

This report includes North Carolina data from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) 2003 "Biennial Report of Hazardous Waste Generation" (2003 BR). Large Quantity Generators (LQGs) and Treatment, Storage, and Disposal Facilities (TSDFs) are required to provide EPA with information on their waste management activities on a biennial basis. The 2003 BR was published on October 1, 2003 and can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/data/br03/index.htm>. The 2005 BR data has not yet been published, so more recent data is not available at this time.

## **NORTH CAROLINA HAZARDOUS WASTE SECTION**

The Hazardous Waste Section was authorized by EPA in 1980 to implement the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) in North Carolina in lieu of the EPA. Continuing developments in the hazardous waste program nationwide have required the Section to continually apply for authorization in program areas, such as case development audits (criminal and administrative investigations), corrective action, and alternatives to permitting and emission monitoring. The Hazardous Waste Section (HWS) has a staff of 54 people working in three branches: Compliance Branch, Facility Management Branch and Programs Branch. Collectively, the duties include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- Regulate the management of hazardous waste by generators, transporters, treatment, storage, disposal and recyclers facilities;
- Educate the hazardous waste community by providing technical assistance through individual consultations and seminars that encourage waste reduction, sound recycling, safe management practices and proper disposal (as a last resort);
- Issue permits specifying requirements that each hazardous waste treatment, storage, recycling or disposal facility must meet;
- Provide a continuing compliance presence at commercial hazardous waste management facilities through the HWS Resident Inspector Program;
- Conduct compliance inspections and, in coordination with the North Carolina Office of the Attorney General, take enforcement actions against violators;

- Require groundwater assessments, facility investigations and corrective measures at facilities where hazardous wastes have been released into the environment and
- Ensure section staff receives necessary training and professional development opportunities to continually improve their job performance.

Information on most of the activities above is captured in the national hazardous waste database, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Information (RCRAInfo). The database is managed by the EPA, and most of the data is entered by authorized state programs. RCRAInfo contains comprehensive information on all facilities that generate or manage hazardous waste within a state, as well as all the HWS's activities affecting these facilities. Data from RCRAInfo will be used to provide information to the Department's Facility Identification Template for States database (FITS) and the Departmental Decision Support System.

To view regulatory information for specific hazardous waste sites, visit <http://www.epa.gov/enviro/>. For details about the Division of Waste Management and the Hazardous Waste Section, visit <http://www.wastenotnc.org/>.

## **HAZARDOUS WASTE GENERATION, MANAGEMENT AND CLEANUP**

In 2003, 439 North Carolina large quantity generators (LQGs) <sup>1</sup> reported generating 78,817 tons of hazardous waste. Of the 439 LQGs, the top 10 facilities generated 43,610 tons, or 55 percent, of the total quantity of hazardous waste generated by North Carolina's large quantity generators. In 2001, 501 LQGs generated 94,534 tons of hazardous waste and the top 10 facilities generated 32,515 tons.

Although only LQGs and TSDFs are required to report their hazardous waste generation and management amounts, it is important to note that North Carolina also has 1,827 small quantity generators and 4,498 conditionally exempt small quantity generators.<sup>2</sup> These facilities are not required to report the amount of hazardous waste they generate because they are typically small businesses for whom periodic reporting could be overly burdensome. However, these facilities collectively generate a significant amount of hazardous waste that must be managed properly and in compliance with all applicable rules. Significant resources are devoted to compliance and enforcement activities, technical assistance and outreach at these facilities.

North Carolina has 31 facilities in the permitting workload universe and 60 facilities in the post-closure workload universe. Approximately 93 percent of these facilities are permitted, under an order or other approved control for management or remediation of their hazardous waste. There are 109 facilities that are subject to RCRA Corrective

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<sup>1</sup> Large Quantity Generators are defined as facilities that generate 1,000 kg (2,200 lbs.) or more of hazardous waste in a calendar month.

<sup>2</sup> Small Quantity Generators are defined as facilities that generate between 100 kg and 1,000 kg (220 lbs. to 2,200 lbs.) per calendar month. Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generators generate less than 100 kg (220 lbs.) per calendar month.

Action. Progress in the Corrective Action Program is tracked through environmental indicators. Currently, 100 percent of high priority corrective action sites have human exposures under control and 82 percent of high priority corrective action sites have groundwater migration under control.

## **NORTH CAROLINA HAZARDOUS WASTE REDUCTION INITIATIVES**

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#### **A. Commitment to Hazardous Waste Minimization**

The HWS continues to work with EPA Region 4 to solicit participants in the National Partnership for Environmental Priorities. This voluntary program fosters partnerships between government and industry to reduce hazardous waste -- especially waste containing any of the 30 chemicals known to be highly toxic. Partners who make significant progress in waste reduction receive national recognition for their achievements.

The North Carolina Hazardous Waste Section has also committed to the following:

- Incorporate pollution prevention training (based on targeted priority chemical waste streams) into annual generator workshops, industry meetings and enforcement settlement negotiations;
- Review facility requests for alternative management practices for hazardous waste (use/reuse, substitution, reclassification and delisting), and
- Support intervention projects to reduce/eliminate the presence of priority chemicals via partnerships with other agencies.

#### **B. Environmental Stewardship Initiative**

DENR's Environmental Stewardship Initiative promotes and encourages superior environmental performance by North Carolina's regulated community. This voluntary program stimulates the development and implementation of programs that use pollution prevention and innovative approaches to meet and exceed regulatory requirements. There are three levels of participation. "Environmental Partners" is for organizations interested in developing a systematic approach to improving their environmental performance. The "Rising Steward" level is designed for those organizations that have a mature environmental management program. The "Environmental Steward" level is for organizations that already display a commitment to exemplary environmental performance beyond what is required by law. All participants must set environmental performance goals that include pollution prevention and are required to report annually on progress towards these goals and net pollution reductions.

This important program not only recognizes outstanding environmental performance at the "Steward" level, but provides encouragement and assistance to foster improved environmental performance by North Carolina organizations. Coaches (technical staff)

are assigned to each participant to provide technical assistance on pollution prevention and develop an environmental management system. Networking opportunities allow participants to learn from each other and share success stories. This program seeks to reduce the impact on the environment beyond measures required by any permit or rule, producing a better environment, conserving natural resources and resulting in long-term economic benefits.

For more information about the program, visit <http://www.p2pays.org/esi/>.

### **C. Mercury Switch Removal**

The HWS will soon implement a program to encourage removal and recycling of mercury-containing convenience light switches from automobiles. Enacted by the General Assembly in 2005, this program requires auto recyclers and scrap metal dealers to remove the switches before the vehicles are crushed, shredded, and recycled into new steel. The vehicle recyclers and scrap metal dealers will receive \$5.00 for each switch that is removed, collected, and sent for recycling. Removal of the switches prior to recycling will greatly reduce mercury emissions during the steel-making process.

### **D. Other Activities**

The HWS will continue to support safe hazardous waste management in North Carolina by:

- Supporting opportunities for waste minimization and recycling and supporting annual generator workshops that help educate the largest generators on hazardous waste regulations and the expectations of hazardous waste inspectors;
- Continuing the HWS initiative to improve compliance in the vast SQG universe through a SQG self-certification survey;
- Seeking to establish a hazardous waste generator security deposit to fund the cleanup of abandoned generator sites that do not meet acceptable environmental standards;
- Continuing to seek EPA authorization to maintain HWS's authority to implement newly promulgated regulations and standards;
- Improving the quality of hazardous waste data for hazardous waste trend analysis and sound decision-making; and
- Participating in EPA's rulemaking projects such as those involving standards for the recycling of used industrial rags and wipes, tailored waste management requirements for academic laboratories, revisions to the regulatory standards for materials that are recycled, and other regulatory proposals.