

Water: Waste Treatment

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Centralized Waste Treatment Final Fact sheet

Fact Sheet; EPA-821-F-00-010; October 2000

EPA is issuing the final Effluent Limitations Guidelines, Pretreatment Standards, and New Source Performance Standards for the Centralized Waste Treatment Point Source Category. This regulation establishes technology-based effluent limitations guidelines for the discharge of pollutants into waters of the United States and into publicly owned treatment works (POTWs) by existing and new facilities that treat or recover hazardous or non-hazardous industrial waste, wastewater, or used material from off-site.

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Background on Effluent Guidelines

Effluent limitations guidelines are national regulations that control the discharge of pollutants to surface waters and to publicly-owned treatment works (POTWs). The effluent guidelines are specific to each industry. Although the effluent limitations are based on specific processes or treatment technologies to control pollutant discharges, EPA does not require dischargers to use these technologies. Individual facilities may meet the requirements using whatever types of treatment technologies and process changes they choose.

The effluent guidelines program is one of EPA's most successful environmental protection programs. Effluent guidelines reduce the discharge of pollutants that have serious environmental impacts, including pollutants that kill or impair fish and other aquatic organisms; cause health problems through contaminated water, fish, or shellfish; and degrade aquatic ecosystems. Since 1974, EPA has promulgated effluent limitations guidelines and standards for more than 50 industrial categories.

Background on the CWT Industry

The business of the centralized waste treatment (CWT) industry is to handle wastewater treatment residuals and industrial process by-products that come from other manufacturing facilities. CWT facilities receive a wide variety of hazardous and non-hazardous industrial wastes for treatment. Many of the wastes contain very high pollutant concentrations and are unusually difficult to treat. Few facilities in the CWT industry achieve optimum pollutant removals.

Summary of the Final Rule

The final regulation reflects extensive data gathering and analysis. Due to the differences among waste treaters, the scope and applicability of the regulation were controversial. After two proposed rulemakings and a notice of data availability, the final rule successfully defines the industry and provides for effective pollutant control.

A CWT facility treats or recovers hazardous or non-hazardous industrial waste, wastewater, or used material from off-site. The attached list clarifies this definition with a list of activities that the rule does not cover.

The rule will control discharges from three major types of wastes: metal-bearing, oily, and organic. In response to comments from the industry, EPA also includes a fourth subcategory for combinations of those wastes.

The technology basis for the final rule varies by type of waste: two-stage chemical precipitation and filtration for metal-bearing wastes; emulsion breaking, two-stage gravity separation and dissolved air flotation for oily wastes; and equalization and biological treatment for organic wastes. To ensure that combined wastes are treated, not simply co-diluted, facilities that elect to comply with the multiple wastestream subcategory must certify that an equivalent treatment system is installed and properly designed, maintained, and operated.

The wastewater flows covered by the final rule include both off-site and on-site generated wastewater. This includes materials received from off-site, solubilization water, used oil/emulsion breaking wastewater, tanker truck/drum/roll-off box washes, equipment washes, air pollution control waters, laboratory-derived wastewater, wastewater from on-site industrial waste combustors, landfills, and contaminated stormwater.

Costs and Environmental Benefits

EPA estimates that the rule will reduce the annual discharge of conventional pollutants by 9.7 million pounds and toxic and non-conventional pollutants by 9.3 million pounds. The benefits include reductions in serious health problems and also improved recreational waters near these facilities. EPA estimates that the annual value of these benefits will range from \$2.21 million to \$8.01 million. The Agency expects compliance costs to be \$35.1 million annually.

Additional Information

The *Federal Register* notice and supporting development documents describing this rule are available on the Internet at: <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/guide/>. For additional information, contact Ms. Jan Matuszko at matuszko.jan@epa.gov or at (202) 566-1035 or Mr. Tim Connor at connor.timothy@epa.gov or at (202) 566-1059.

Definition of a Centralized Waste Treatment Facility

The term centralized waste treatment facility means a facility that treats or recovers hazardous or non-hazardous industrial metal-bearing waste, oily waste, and organic-bearing waste from off-site.

The term CWT facility generally does not apply to facilities or portions of facilities engaged in the following activities:

- operations at facilities which are subject to existing national effluent limitations guidelines and standards and which receive wastes from off-site for treatment or recovery that are subject to the same national effluent limitations guidelines and standards as the on-site generated wastes;
 - operations at facilities which receive off-site wastes whose nature and treatment are compatible with the treatment of on site non-CWT wastes;
 - operations in which all waste is received from off-site by pipeline or a fixed delivery system;
 - treatment of wastewater from some product stewardship activities;
 - used oil filter recycling operations generating no wastewater;
 - solids recovery operations so long as the solids remain in solid form when in contact with water and do not leach chemicals into the water (e.g. recycling of aluminum cans, glass, and plastic bottles);
 - scrap metal processing or auto salvage operations;
 - transfer stations or municipal recycling centers;
 - treatment of animal or vegetable fats/oils , or recovery of material from grease traps or interceptors used in food service activities;
 - treatment or recovery of material from off-site wastes generated by facilities engaged only in food processing;
 - transportation equipment cleaning (TEC) operations (unless the TEC wastewaters are mixed with other wastewaters);
 - solvent recovery operations that involve the separation of solvent mixtures by distillation;
 - centralized silver recovery operations on used photographic and x-ray materials, unless the silver recovery wastewaters are mixed with other wastewater;
 - operations that only accept off-site wastes for treatability studies, research and development, or chemical or physical analysis;
 - "dry" fuel blending operations, "dry" waste solidification/stabilization operations, "dry" used oil filter or oily absorbents recycling operations, or "dry" high temperature metals recovery operations;
 - ship servicing operations that discharge marine-generated wastes where they are off loaded - including wash water from equipment and tank cleaning, ballast water, bilge water, and other wastes generated (while operating on inland, coastal, or open waters or while berthed) as part of routine ship maintenance and operation;
 - land treatment units or land application operations;
 - operations engaged exclusively in landfilling and/or the treatment of landfill wastewaters (whether generated on- or off-site);
 - operations engaged exclusively in incineration; and
 - metals treatment and recovery operations which are subject to the secondary metals provisions of 40 CFR 421, the Nonferrous Metals Manufacturing Point Source Category.
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