

What are universal wastes?

Some hazardous wastes are so common, they're practically universal. They're what state and federal environmental rules call "universal waste."

All businesses generate universal wastes, which include batteries, some pesticides, mercury-containing equipment, thermostats, and spent lamps.

This brochure is designed to assist Idaho businesses to:

- ✓ understand the Universal Waste Rule
- ✓ identify and manage universal wastes generated at your business
- ✓ learn how proper management of universal wastes can benefit your business and Idaho's environment

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Web Resources

Hazardous Waste in Idaho

www.deq.idaho.gov/hazardous-waste

Universal Wastes

www.deq.idaho.gov/universal-wastes

Universal Wastes

www.epa.gov/wastes/hazard/wastetypes/universal.htm

Universal Wastes Resources

www.epa.gov/wastes/hazard/wastetypes/universal/resrcs.htm



Printed on recycled paper, DEQ July 2013. PID 0205, CA 30060. Costs associated with this publication are available from the State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality in accordance with Section 60-202, Idaho Code.



Hazardous Waste in Idaho

Properly Managing Universal Wastes



Idaho Department of
Environmental Quality
www.deq.idaho.gov



What is hazardous waste?

Hazardous waste poses a threat to human health and the environment due to inherent properties such as toxicity, ignitability, corrosivity, or reactivity.

Every business in Idaho is required to track the volume of wastes generated and determine whether or not each is hazardous. Facilities that generate hazardous waste are regulated by state and federal rules that govern permitting, storage, transport, and disposal.

What is the Universal Waste Rule?

The Universal Waste Rule permits certain hazardous wastes known as “universal wastes” to be managed under streamlined requirements. The rule is designed to encourage recycling and proper disposal of some common hazardous wastes and to reduce the regulatory burden on businesses that generate these wastes. Idaho has adopted the federal Universal Waste Rule, so Idaho’s requirements are identical to those of the federal government.

What businesses does the Universal Waste Rule apply to?

The Universal Waste Rule applies to both small and large quantity hazardous waste generators and transporters. It does not apply to treatment, storage, and disposal facilities.

- Small Quantity Generator (SQG): generates between 220 and 2,200 pounds of hazardous waste per calendar month.
- Large Quantity Generator (LQG): generates 2,200 or more pounds of hazardous waste (or 2.2 or more pounds of acute hazardous waste) per calendar month.

Remember:

Universal wastes are still hazardous wastes and must be managed accordingly.

Universal Wastes

Batteries such as nickel-cadmium (Ni-Cd) and small sealed lead-acid batteries, which are found in many common items, including electronic equipment, cell phones, portable computers, and emergency backup lighting.

Agricultural Pesticides that have been recalled or banned from use, are obsolete, have become damaged, or are no longer needed due to changes in use.

Thermostats, which can contain as much as three grams of liquid mercury and are located in almost any building, including commercial, industrial, agricultural, community, and household buildings.

Spent Lamps, which can contain mercury or lead. Examples include fluorescent, high-intensity discharge (HID), neon, mercury vapor, high-pressure sodium, and metal halide lamps.

Mercury-Containing Equipment used in industry, hospitals, and households. Examples include mercury containing thermostats, barometers, manometers, temperature and pressure gauges, and mercury switches, such as light switches in automobiles.

Other materials are under consideration for designation as universal wastes. For more information, contact DEQ.

What about conditionally exempt small quantity generators?

Although the rule does not apply specifically to conditionally exempt small quantity generators (CESQGs), they may benefit as well.

CESQGs are businesses that generate no more than 220 pounds of hazardous waste (or no more than 2.2 pounds of acute hazardous waste) per calendar month. By managing and recycling their universal wastes according to the rule, CESQGs do not have to count these wastes toward their monthly waste generation volume. This may help a facility maintain its CESQG status by keeping monthly hazardous waste generation rates below the threshold for the category. In addition, the CESQG will be helping to protect the environment through proper recycling, treatment, and disposal.

What requirements must be met?

You must store universal wastes in an environmentally responsible manner so that no spills or leaks occur. Waste must be sent to an approved universal waste handler or universal waste destination facility.

How does the Universal Waste Rule benefit my business?

The Universal Waste Rule can save you time and money! You can reduce compliance costs and the amount of time spent on paperwork.

Universal waste management requirements are less stringent than those for other hazardous wastes. Here are some of the benefits:

- ✓ **Longer storage times:** You can accumulate universal waste for up to one year before sending it for disposal.
- ✓ **Less hazardous waste counted toward total:** You don’t need to include universal waste when you figure your hazardous waste generator status and when you calculate your monthly accumulation total.
- ✓ **Exemption from certain hauling requirements:** You don’t need a hazardous waste manifest when shipping your universal waste and you don’t need to use a registered waste hauler to transport your universal waste in Idaho.