

1. What is Hazardous Waste?

Hazardous waste is a waste that is dangerous or potentially harmful to your health or the environment. They can be discarded commercial products, like cleaning fluids or pesticides, or the by-products of manufacturing processes.

2. What is a hazardous waste generator?

A hazardous waste generator is any person or site whose processes and actions create hazardous waste. Generators are divided into three categories based on the quantity of waste they produce:

- Large Quantity Generators (LQGs) generate 1,000 kilograms per month or more of hazardous waste, more than 1 kilogram per month of acutely hazardous waste, or more than 100 kilograms per month of acute spill residue or soil.
- Small Quantity Generators (SQGs) generate more than 100 kilograms, but less than 1,000 kilograms, of hazardous waste per month.
- Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generators (CESQGs) generate 100 kilograms or less per month of hazardous waste, or 1 kilogram or less per month of acutely hazardous waste, or less than 100 kilograms per month of acute spill residue or soil.

Each class of generator must comply with its own set of EPA and State requirements.

3. How is hazardous waste managed and disposed?

If a hazardous waste cannot be recycled, it must be managed and disposed of properly. The hazardous waste identification (HWID) process is the crucial first step in the hazardous waste management system. Correctly determining whether a waste meets the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) definition of hazardous waste is essential to determining how the waste must be managed. The waste generator has responsibility for determining if a waste is a RCRA hazardous waste. The HWID process consists of four questions:

- Is the material a solid waste?
- Is the waste specifically excluded from RCRA?
- Is the waste a listed hazardous waste?
- Does the waste exhibit a characteristic of hazardous waste?

4. What are the characteristics of hazardous waste?

Characteristics of hazardous waste include ignitability, corrosivity (strong acids or caustics), reactivity (explosives or items which can release toxic gases when mixed with water), and

toxicity (substances which will release certain levels of toxics when subjected to a test simulating conditions in a landfill) or if it is carcinogenic or radioactive.

5. Is medical waste considered hazardous waste?

Medical waste is any waste material generated at health care facilities, such as hospitals, clinics, physician's offices, dental practices, blood banks, and veterinary hospitals/clinics, as well as medical research facilities and laboratories. It is considered “non-hazardous waste – industrial waste” and is regulated by other EPA and State laws. However, disposal of some pharmaceuticals, such as P-listed drugs, U-listed drugs, drugs which contain heavy metals (i.e. thimerosal and barium sulfate) and drugs that fit the “characteristics of hazardous waste” are considered hazardous waste.

6. What are the adverse health effects if I am exposed to hazardous waste?

When hazardous wastes are released in the air, water, or on the land they can spread, contaminating even more of the environment and posing greater threats to your health. Adverse health effects will vary based on the chemicals or agents in which you were exposed. The most common agents or chemicals found in hazardous waste are lead, arsenic, trichloroethylene, tetrachloroethylene, benzene, cadmium, chromium, mercury, polychlorinated biphenyls and manganese.

7. What do I do if I think I have been exposed to hazardous waste?

An exposure assessment should be conducted to determine if hazardous exposure has occurred and whether the exposure is at a level that is a risk to health. This process includes investigating, monitoring, and conducting research in determining an exposure assessment. A team of medical and environmental specialists can determine who could have been exposed, how the exposure could occur (inhalation, ingestion, through the skin or another route), how much and often the exposure could occur, as well as address any concerns regarding current or future related health issues. In addition, it is necessary to create a preventative exposure plan to mitigate risks and amounts of exposure and medical surveillance and environmental monitoring programs.

For more information related to hazardous waste and hazardous exposures please contact us at solutions@coagencyteam.com