



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS – For Businesses

Fact Sheet No. SHWMB 00-1 (02/09)

UNIVERSAL WASTE RULE

Until recently several wastes, namely batteries, pesticides, mercury containing equipment (e.g., thermostats) and mercury containing lamps (e.g., fluorescent lamps) are afforded less stringent management standards when handled pursuant by the requirements of the Universal Waste Rule (UWR). Please remember this fact sheet serves only as a guide and does not replace the requirements of the DRGHW.

1. What are universal wastes?

Universal wastes are items that are generated by large numbers of businesses in relatively small quantities. Currently, four hazardous wastes are identified as universal wastes. These universal wastes are batteries, mercury containing equipment, obsolete agricultural pesticides and fluorescent/high intensity discharge lamps.

2. How does the management of hazardous waste under the UWR differ from managing the waste in accordance with the DRGHW requirements for hazardous waste generators?

As the stringency of the DRGHW differ between hazardous waste generator categories, so does the UWR. The UWR has two categories of universal waste handlers, small quantity and large quantity. Universal waste handlers have the ability to generate larger quantities of universal waste, and accumulate these wastes onsite for longer periods of time than when these same wastes are managed under the hazardous waste requirements for generators. For example, a small quantity handler of universal waste may accumulate less than 11,000 pounds (5,000 kg) of universal waste for periods up to one year.

3. What is the main difference between the small quantity and large quantity handlers of universal waste?

A small quantity handler of universal waste may accumulate less than 11,000 pounds (5,000 kg) of total universal waste, for periods up to one year.

A large quantity handler of universal waste is one who accumulates 11,000 pounds (5,000 kg) or more of total universal waste for periods up to one year.

4. In general, what must a small quantity handler of universal waste do to comply with the requirements of the DRGHW, Part 273.

Small quantity handlers must ensure that any universal wastes they are accumulating are managed in a closed container that prevents the release of the universal waste or waste components. Each

container must be labeled with the type of universal waste it contains. The small quantity handler may accumulate its universal waste no longer than one year from the date the waste was generated, and must maintain records demonstrating the actual generation date. Additionally, the small quantity handler must ensure all employees handling a universal waste have been provided information on proper handling and emergency procedures appropriate to the types of wastes managed. A small quantity universal waste handler must send its universal waste to another universal waste handler or a permitted facility. Small quantity handlers are not required to use a uniform hazardous waste manifest; however, they are required to maintain records documenting universal waste shipments. Universal waste shipments may be transported by a contracted transporter or by the small quantity handler of universal waste. In either case, a Delaware Hazardous Waste Transporter Permit is not required.

5. What are the requirements for a large quantity handler of universal waste?

The requirements for large quantity handlers are more stringent than those of small quantity handlers of universal waste. First, the large quantity handler must notify the Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Branch and receive an EPA Identification Number. Much like the small quantity handler, the universal waste must be accumulated in a closed container labeled with what it contains. Large quantity handlers may not accumulate universal wastes for more than one year and must maintain records demonstrating the date of the universal waste generation. Employees managing universal waste must be trained as to proper waste handling and emergency procedures. Shipments of universal waste from a large quantity handler must be tracked on a manifest, bill of lading, or similar type of document which must be maintained and made available for inspection for at least three (3) years.

6. Are there requirements for universal waste transporters?

While a Delaware Hazardous Waste Transporter permit is not required, there are certain regulatory requirements for universal waste transporters. Universal waste transporters may not dispose of, dilute, or treat universal waste, nor can transporters store universal waste shipments more than ten (10) days without becoming subject to more stringent handler requirements. Universal waste transporters must deliver the universal waste to either another universal waste transporter, or a permitted facility or a foreign destination. Transporters must ensure compliance with all applicable Department of Transportation regulations found in 49 CFR 171 through 180.

7. What are the requirements for a universal waste destination facility?

Universal waste destination facilities are, in actuality, permitted hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal facilities (TSDFs). Therefore, these facilities must comply with the requirements for TSDFs found in the DRGHW.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact the Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Branch at 302.739.9403.