



**Environmental
Protection
Agency**

Flushing of Hazardous Waste Pharmaceuticals is Prohibited!

THIS POLICY DOES NOT HAVE THE FORCE OF LAW

Hazardous Waste Program

The purpose of this document is to inform the health care community about the new U.S. EPA rule that takes effect on August 21, 2019. In this new rule the sewerage of hazardous waste pharmaceuticals is prohibited as a disposal option.

Can hazardous waste pharmaceuticals be poured down the drain?

No! Previously, you could obtain permission from your publicly owned treatment works to dispose of your hazardous waste pharmaceuticals by flushing them down the drain, but on **August 21, 2019**, U.S. EPA's final rule for **Hazardous Waste Pharmaceuticals** takes effect, including prohibiting sewerage of hazardous waste pharmaceuticals. This prohibition takes effect nationwide on this date.

Does this apply to me?

This prohibition applies to the types of facilities listed below, which includes healthcare facilities that are very small quantity generators.

- A **"healthcare facility"** which includes, but is not limited to, hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, ambulatory surgical centers, health clinics, physicians' offices, optical and dental providers, chiropractors, long term care facilities, ambulance services, coroners and medical examiners, pharmacies, long-term care pharmacies, mail-order pharmacies, retailers of over the counter medications; and veterinary clinics and hospitals.
- A **"reverse distributor"** is engaged in the management of prescription hazardous waste pharmaceuticals. EPA used the terms "reverse distribution" to describe the process or system employed by the retail sector to manage these unsold retail items to obtain manufacturer credit.

Is my pharmaceutical waste a hazardous waste?

Hazardous waste pharmaceuticals are discarded pharmaceuticals that meet the regulatory definition of a listed or characteristic hazardous waste. Some examples of listed hazardous pharmaceutical wastes include substances such as discarded lindane, epinephrine, nicotine, Coumadin (warfarin), selenium dioxide, Mitomycin C, and phentermine. Additional resources can be found [here](#) and [here](#). However, it is up to the generator to determine if their pharmaceutical waste is hazardous.

These hazardous waste pharmaceuticals will need to be managed according to your **generator status**. For more information about proper management and disposal of hazardous waste pharmaceuticals please review the guidance document for **Management of Hazardous Waste Pharmaceuticals from Healthcare Facilities**.

What about other DEA regulated pharmaceutical waste?

Sewering is not an option for pharmaceutical waste that is also listed as a schedule II-V controlled substance. These must be managed according to the rules of the U.S. **Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)**. The DEA is the agency responsible for enforcing the controlled substances laws and regulations of the United States.



The Disposal of Hazardous Pharmaceutical Wastes from Businesses

When will Ohio adopt U.S. EPA rules for hazardous waste pharmaceuticals?

On February 22, 2019, U. S. EPA in a Federal Register proposed new “*Management Standards for Hazardous Waste Pharmaceuticals and Amendments to the P075 Listing for Nicotine.*” Ohio EPA adopted these rules on October 5, 2020.

Contact

For more information, contact the Hazardous Waste Compliance Assurance Section of the *Division of Environmental Response and Revitalization* at 614-644-2924, or one of our *District Offices*. You may also review information on the hazardous *Pharmaceutical* web page. If you have questions about leftover medication at home, please also review the DMWM web site regarding *Pharmaceutical waste*.