



Are You Properly Managing Your Hazardous Waste Containers?

THIS POLICY DOES NOT HAVE THE FORCE OF LAW

Hazardous Waste Program

*Ohio's rules for management of hazardous waste containers are found in Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) rules **3745-52-16** and **3745-52-17**. If your business generates hazardous waste, you need to be aware of these requirements to help ensure that you are properly managing your containers. This fact sheet will help you determine your compliance and avoid violations. Terms highlighted in bold are defined in the glossary at the end of this fact sheet.*

If you are a **small quantity generator** (SQG) or **large quantity generator** (LQG) of hazardous waste, you must comply with the container requirements. A "container" is a portable device used to store waste. Common containers are drums of various sizes (five to 55-gallons or more) as well as portable totes.



Container Labeling

Under the rules, all containers holding hazardous waste must be labeled with the words "Hazardous Waste" and an indication of the content's hazards. Additionally, a very small quantity generator (VSQG) that sends waste to an LQG under the control of the same person must also follow the labeling requirements per OAC rule **3745-52-14(A)(5)(h)(ii)**.

Another important component of container labeling is the accumulation start date. This date goes on a container as soon as you begin putting hazardous waste in it. This must be done for all containers of hazardous waste, except for a container in a satellite area. (See **satellite accumulation area** discussion later in this fact sheet.) The accumulation start date is very important because it demonstrates that you are not storing hazardous waste on-site longer than the rules allow.

Failing to put the accumulation start date on a container is one of the most common generator violations. To help avoid a violation, your container inspections should include a careful review of labels and accumulation start dates. Make sure they are filled out and in good condition. If a label gets torn or becomes difficult to read, replace it. If you store hazardous waste containers outside, check labels during your inspections to ensure they haven't fallen off or become damaged.

Are You Properly Managing Your Hazardous Waste Containers?

Hazardous Waste Satellite Accumulation Areas

An area where hazardous waste is collected at or near the point of generation is called a "satellite accumulation area." These areas are commonly found near process lines or in areas like service garages, paint shops or labs. To comply with the satellite area rules, you must ensure that:

- The area is at or near the point where the waste is generated;
- The area is under the direct control of a person working in that area (e.g., the process operator);
- Each container in the satellite area is marked as "Hazardous Waste" and an indication of the content's hazards;
- Containers are closed, unless adding or removing waste, or when temporary venting is necessary; and
- Each container is in good condition and is compatible with the wastes stored in it.



The total quantity of an individual waste stream in the satellite area cannot exceed 55 gallons of hazardous waste (or roughly one quart of **acute hazardous waste**). You can have more than one container in a satellite area, however, the 55-gallon limit applies to the total volume of each individual waste stream in the satellite area.

Once you accumulate 55 gallons of waste, any excess hazardous waste over 55 gallons must be moved from the satellite area to your central accumulation area within three days. At this time, you must also record an accumulation start date on the container(s).

Central Accumulation Area Inspections

The rules require that you conduct weekly (one time during the calendar week) inspections of containers in your central accumulation area. Under the rules, there is no specific requirement to document these inspections or maintain inspection logs. However, Ohio EPA recommends that you complete and keep logs to demonstrate that you've been conducting inspections. This will help document that you're in compliance if your business is ever inspected by Ohio EPA and can also assist with conducting closure of the unit in the future.

If you choose to keep a log of your central accumulation area inspections, there is no standardized inspection form that must be used. You can create your own form or use the **Hazardous Waste Inspection Log** created by Ohio EPA.

Some important items to consider during the inspections:

- Are containers properly labeled?
- Do containers have accumulation start dates?
- Are containers closed and in good condition (no rust, leaks, etc.)?
- Is adequate aisle space provided between containers?

Tips for Your Hazardous Waste Central Accumulation Area

- Consider restricting access to help avoid accidents.
- Keep waste storage areas away from high traffic areas.
- Mark the area with a sign, so employees know the area is for hazardous waste accumulation only.
- Have adequate spill control equipment near the storage area.
- Have adequate aisle space between containers in your storage area.

If you find problems in your central accumulation area, correct them immediately. It's important to note that this inspection requirement only applies to hazardous waste containers in your central accumulation area, not to containers in a satellite area. Although Ohio EPA encourages regular inspection of these areas to avoid potential issues.

You are required to keep equipment and supplies near your central accumulation area to respond to a hazardous waste incident (fire, spill or release). This includes an emergency communication device, fire control, and spill control equipment. Specific information on required emergency preparedness and prevention equipment can be found in OAC rule **3745-52-16(B)(8)(b)** for SQGs and OAC rule **3745-52-252** for LQGs. Your emergency equipment is required to be inspected as needed to ensure it operates properly. Similarly, while there is no specific requirement to complete and keep inspection logs for emergency equipment, Ohio EPA recommends that you do so to demonstrate compliance.

Are You Properly Managing Your Hazardous Waste Containers?

Condition of Containers

All hazardous waste containers need to be closed, except when adding or removing waste or when venting of the container is necessary for proper operation or to prevent a dangerous situation. To meet the criteria of being "closed," a drum must have all snap rings tightly bolted, bungholes capped and lids secured. It is acceptable for a funnel to be threaded into a bunghole and secured with a lid.

To help prevent leaks and spills, your containers must be kept in good condition. Make sure your drums are not rusting or damaged. You must also handle containers to prevent damage and leaks. If a container is damaged (e.g., hit by a forklift or other machinery), transfer the contents into another drum.

Miscellaneous

- Under OAC rules [3745-52-16\(B\)\(\(8\)\(e\)\)](#) and [3745-52-255](#), you must have adequate aisle space between hazardous waste containers in your central accumulation area. Although there is no specific footage requirement, there must be enough room to move between containers and respond to a hazardous waste incident. Such responses may include over packing drums, fixing container labels, or responding to a fire or release.
- Many business owners ask about technical specifications for containers. Ohio EPA's hazardous waste rules do not outline the specific type of drum that must be used for different waste streams. There is a general requirement, however, that the container must be compatible with the hazardous waste being stored in it. For example, it's not recommended that you store a corrosive waste such as an acid in a metal drum that could deteriorate.
- Prior to shipping hazardous waste off-site, SQGs and LQGs must mark containers with all applicable EPA hazardous waste numbers, per OAC rule [3745-52-32](#). A nationally recognized electronic system, such as barcoding, may be used instead of marking numbers on containers. There is also a requirement that containers shipped off-site meet applicable Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations. You should refer to OAC rules [3745-52-30 through 3745-52-33](#) for more detailed specifications on pre-transport requirements. For more information on the DOT requirements, contact the [Public Utilities Commission of Ohio](#) at (800) 686-7826.
- Under Ohio EPA's rules, large quantity generators that have reactive or ignitable hazardous waste must store these wastes at least 50 feet from the property line unless you have a waiver allowing storage of these types of wastes within the 50-foot range. For more information about ignitable waste storage, you should also contact your local fire department. There may be specific storage requirements for ignitable wastes under your local fire codes.

Containment for Containers

Another common question from businesses relates to secondary containment for hazardous waste central accumulation areas. As a generator, you are not required under Ohio EPA's hazardous waste rules to provide secondary containment for your central accumulation area. For other hazardous waste handlers, such as companies pursuing permits for hazardous waste storage or disposal, secondary containment for containers is required.

Although your business may just be generating hazardous waste, it's a good idea to consider secondary containment especially if you are storing any hazardous waste outside. A simple concrete pad or other containment device can help you contain spills and avoid a costly cleanup.



Are You Properly Managing Your Hazardous Waste Containers?

Although the hazardous waste rules do not require generators to provide secondary containment, other rules may apply. This could include containment requirements under Ohio EPA's waste water program or your local sewer ordinance to help prevent spills from entering a sewer system. Contact Ohio EPA's *Division of Surface Water* at (614) 644-2001 or check your local sewer ordinance for additional regulations.

You may also find that local fire codes require containment for materials such as ignitable wastes. Check with your local fire department for more information.

Empty Containers

Questions are often raised about when a container which once held hazardous waste would be considered empty. The regulatory definition of a "RCRA empty" container that once held hazardous waste is found in *OAC rule 3745-51-07*.

A container is considered empty if all wastes have been removed, using common practices such as pouring, pumping or aspirating. In addition, the following criteria must be met:

- If no more than one inch of residue remains in the bottom of the container; or
- No more than 3 percent of residue by weight (of the total capacity of the container) remains in the container.
- If the container is greater than 110 gallons in size: no more than 0.3 percent of residue by weight (of the total capacity of the container remains) remains in the container.

A container that held a hazardous waste compressed gas is empty when the pressure in the container reaches atmospheric pressure. A container which held an **acute hazardous waste** must be triple rinsed before being considered empty. Rinsate from triple rinsing a container or inner liner that held an acute listed hazardous waste remains an acute listed hazardous waste and is fully regulated.

Healthcare facilities and reverse distributors who manage containers of hazardous waste pharmaceuticals are subject to *OAC rule 3745-266-507* to determine when the containers are considered empty, with the exception of IV bags and other containers such as delivery devices, inhalers, nebulizers, and tubes of ointments, gels, or creams that held non-acute hazardous waste. These type of containers are still regulated under OAC rule *3745-51-07*.

Once a container is considered "RCRA empty," it can be managed as a non-hazardous waste. Please note, however, that although the container itself may not be regulated as hazardous waste, any waste water or rinseate generated from cleaning out containers would need to be evaluated and, if hazardous, properly disposed of.

For more information on the empty container rule, see Ohio EPA's guidance document titled "Container Washing Operations" at https://epa.ohio.gov/static/Portals/32/pdf/Container_Washing_Operations_Guidance.pdf.

For more information on closed containers see Ohio EPA's guidance document titled "Closed Container Guidance" at https://epa.ohio.gov/static/Portals/32/pdf/Closed_Container_Guidance.pdf.

For more information on treatment in containers see Ohio EPA's guidance document titled "Generator Treatment" at; https://epa.ohio.gov/static/Portals/32/pdf/Generator_Treatment_Guidance.pdf.

To Get More Help

Division of Environmental Response
and Revitalization's *Hazardous Waste Program*
(614) 644-2924

Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance's
Office of *Compliance Assistance and Pollution Prevention*
(800) 329-7518

Glossary

Acute Hazardous Wastes

Acute wastes are very toxic and can be harmful to humans in small amounts. Ohio EPA's rules include a specific list of acute hazardous wastes found in ***OAC rule 3745-51-33(E)***.

Small Quantity Generator (SQG)

Generates between 220 and 2,200 pounds of hazardous waste in a calendar month.

Large Quantity Generator (LQG)

Generates more than 2,200 pounds of hazardous waste in a calendar month, or generates more than 2.2 pounds of acute hazardous waste in a calendar month.

Satellite Accumulation Area

An area where hazardous waste is collected at or near the point where it is initially generated. The satellite area must be under the control of the process operator where the hazardous waste is generated.