



Universal Waste

40 CFR Part 273

Universal wastes are wastes that meet hazardous waste criteria but, because they pose a relatively low-risk compared to other hazardous wastes and are generated by a wide variety and large number of businesses, are exempt from regulation as hazardous waste.

What does a Small Quantity Handler need to comply with?

Although each category of universal waste has unique waste management requirements (individual fact sheets are available for lamps, mercury-containing devices and CRTs), small quantity handlers must manage all universal wastes according to the following general requirements:

- Manage universal wastes in a way that prevents breakage and releases to the environment.
- Keep containers of universal waste closed.
- Immediately contain and transfer any universal wastes that show evidence of leakage or damage to an appropriate container.
- Meet waste-specific container or packaging requirements.
- Label or mark the universal waste (or container holding the universal waste) to indicate that it is a waste or universal waste. For example, universal waste lamps should be marked as “Universal Waste Lamps,” “Waste Lamps,” or “Used Lamps,” etc.
- Accumulate universal waste for no longer than one year (a handler must be able to demonstrate the length of time that a universal waste has been accumulated from the date it became a waste or is received).
- Ensure that employees handling universal waste are familiar with proper handling and emergency procedures, relative to their responsibilities.

If you have any questions regarding making a hazardous waste determination please call the New Mexico Environment Department’s Hazardous Waste Bureau for further assistance and information. The contact telephone number is (505) 476-6000 or toll free at (866) 428-6535.