

December 2, 2009

WASTE MINIMIZATION AND COMPLIANCE REPORT (RCN 10-99-904)

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive provides policy for collecting and reporting data required for reports for the Office of the Federal Environmental Executive, the Agency Environmental Executive, and the Environmental Protection Agency on waste generation, waste disposal, and waste handling throughout VHA.

2. BACKGROUND

a. Executive Order (E.O.) 13423, Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management, is a policy document for resource conservation and pollution prevention. Agencies are to conduct environmental, transportation, and energy-related activities under the law in support of their respective missions, in an environmentally, economically and fiscally sound, integrated, continuously improving, efficient, and sustainable manner. They are required to reduce the quantity of toxic and hazardous chemicals and materials acquired, used, or disposed of; increase the diversion of solid waste as appropriate; and maintain cost-effective waste prevention and recycling programs at their respective facilities.

b. The Pollution Prevention Act of 1990 establishes Pollution Prevention (P2) as a national objective, and defines P2 as source reduction and other practices that reduce or eliminate the creation of pollutants. This act establishes a hierarchy of environmental protection consisting of prevention or source reduction, recycling, treatment, and disposal into the environment. The most desirable method of pollution abatement is prevention or source reduction. Disposal or other releases into the environment should be done only as a last resort and then in an environmentally-safe manner.

c. The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (2002 Farm Bill) was established to increase the purchase and use of biobased products. Biopreferred includes a preferred procurement program for Federal agencies and their contractors, and a voluntary labeling program for the broad scale consumer market of biobased products. Under this program, biopreferred designates items or generic groupings of biobased products, which are required for purchase by Federal agencies and their contractors.

d. The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) covers the generation, treatment, storage, disposal, and transportation of both hazardous and non-hazardous waste, and emphasizes source reduction as the highest priority. RCRA requires the “cradle-to-grave” management of hazardous waste (HW), encourages recycling and reuse, and further requires HW generators and treatment, storage, and disposal facility owners to certify that the generator has a program in place to “reduce the volume or quantity and toxicity” of waste.

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e. The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) regulates the safe use of herbicides, pesticides, and rodenticides by requiring manufacturers to register their products for general or restricted use. In addition, FIFRA regulations establish the labeling of pesticide containers and the application, storage, and disposal of pesticides.

3. POLICY. It is VHA policy that all facilities must maintain effective pollution prevention programs and recognize the value of waste minimization through the use of effective recycling and waste minimization programs in conjunction with environmentally preferable procurements.

4. ACTION

a. **Director, Environmental Programs Service (EPS) (10NP).** The EPS Director is responsible for:

(1) Generating the Waste Minimization Compliance Report (Report Control Number (RCN) 10-99-904). Based upon the data collected from the preceding year for publication, this report must cover the following topical areas:

(a) Solid and regulated medical waste;

(b) Hazardous waste;

(c) Radioactive waste;

(d) Recycling activities; and

(e) Procurement of biobased, biopreferred, and recycled content products as required for RCRA, Section 6002 reporting.

(2) Publishing a quarterly Recycling Report extracted from quarterly data provided from the RCN 10-99-904.

(3) Determining if there are national trends requiring redress.

(4) Providing periodic reviews of the report data and follow-up with the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N).

b. **Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Directors.** Each VISN Director is responsible for:

(1) Monitoring VISN facilities to ensure adequate staffing is provided at the facility level to accomplish the following tasks:

(a) To assess facility activities to determine the quantity and composition of the facility's waste streams and identify pollution prevention opportunities.

(b) To collect data on waste generation, disposal costs, recycling, environmentally preferable procurements, and other data as required.

(c) To identify VHA facility organization(s) and individual(s) responsible for the Waste Minimization Report at their respective facilities.

(d) To submit requested data for the RCN 10-99-904 to EPS on a quarterly basis, in accordance with the guidance provided by EPS (10NP).

(2) Establishing and updating environmentally preferable procurements activities throughout VISN facilities. There must be:

(a) An established local policy to encourage the procurement of biopreferred products whenever practicable and cost effective.

(b) A monitor program which progresses toward the procurement of environmentally preferable products so program status and goals can be established within the VISN.

(3) Reviewing of the RCN 10-99-904, and recycling reports published by EPS to:

(a) Assess VISN waste minimization, recycling, and biopreferred procurement program status.

(b) Enhance VISN programs and progress in the following areas:

1. Waste minimization,

2. Recycling, and

3. Biopreferred procurements.

(4) Monitoring the quality of facility data collected and entered into the RCN 10-99-904 on a periodic basis to ensure accuracy.

c. **VHA Facility Directors.** Each facility Director is responsible for:

(1) The facility's monitoring of their waste management, recycling, and biopreferred procurement activities to ensure compliance with environmental requirements, and ensure effective management of these programs.

(2) Designating appropriate facility organization(s) or individual(s) to:

(a) Collect and generate waste poundage and cost data required by the RCN 10-99-904. The data required includes:

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1. Solid and regulated medical waste;
2. Hazardous waste;
3. Radioactive waste;
4. Recycling activities; and
5. Procurement of biobased, biopreferred, and recycled content products as required for RCRA, Section 6002 reporting.

(b) Ensure collected data is entered into the EPS Web site designated for collection of Waste Minimization Report data in accordance with the deadlines established by EPS.

5. REFERENCES

- a. Executive Order 13423, Strengthening, Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management, dated January 26, 2007.
- b. Pollution Prevention Act of 1990, Title 42 United States Code (U.S.C.) Chapter 133: Pollution Prevention, 13101 et.seq.
- c. Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (2002 Farm Bill) and Expanded by SEC. 9002 Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill).
- d. Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 6901 et.seq.; Federal Facility Compliance Act, 42 U.S.C. 6961.
- e. Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, dated November 28, 1975, as amended.

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: The Director, Environmental Programs Service (10NP) is responsible for VHA programs related to this Directive (202) 266-4623.

7. RESCISSION. VHA Directive 2004-069 is rescinded. This VHA Directive expires December 31, 2014.

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