
Solvent-Contaminated Wipes Rule

Iowa Waste Reduction Center / University of Northern Iowa
319-273-8905 or 1-800-422-3109

40 CFR 261.4(a)(26) and 40 CFR 261.4(b)(18)

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Do these regulations apply to my operation?

These regulations address both reusable (laundry service) and disposable solvent-contaminated rags. 40 CFR 261.4(a)(26) addresses solvent-contaminated wipes that will be cleaned (laundered) and reused while 40 CFR 261.4(b)(18) addresses solvent-contaminated wipes destined for disposal.

A solvent-contaminated wipe is defined as shop towel, rag, pad, or swab made of wood pulp, fabric, cotton, polyester blends, or other material that after use or after cleaning up a spill, contains a solvent that would be considered hazardous waste either because it is listed in the hazardous waste regulations, or because it exhibits the characteristic of ignitability.

Solvent-contaminated wipes do not include wipes contaminated with hazardous waste other than solvents, or that exhibit the characteristic of toxicity, corrosivity, or reactivity due to contaminants other than solvents.

Solvent-contaminated wipes sent for cleaning (laundry service wipes)

40 CFR 261.4(a)(26) states solvent-contaminated wipes that are sent for cleaning and reuse are not considered solid wastes (and therefore not hazardous wastes) from the point of generation provide that:

- Accumulation, storage and transportation are conducted in non-leaking and sealed containers.
- The containers are clearly labeled “Excluded Solvent-Contaminated Wipes.”
- On-site accumulation does not exceed 180 days.
- The wipes/containers contain no free liquids prior to transport. (Recovered free liquids, if any, must be managed in accordance with other applicable 40 CFR regulations).
- The wipes are sent to a laundry or dry cleaner whose discharge, if any, is regulated under 301, 307 and/or 402 of the Clean Water Act.
- The generator maintains:
 - The name and address of the laundry or dry cleaner receiving the wipes
 - Documentation that the 180-day accumulation time limit is being met
 - A description of the process used to ensure the wipes contain no free liquids at the time of transportation for disposal.

Solvent-contaminated wipes destined for disposal

40 CFR 261.4(b)(18) states solvent-contaminated wipes (except for those that are contaminated with trichloroethylene) that are sent for disposal are not hazardous wastes from the point of generation provided that:

- Accumulation, storage and transportation are conducted in non-leaking and sealed containers.
- The containers are clearly labeled “Excluded Solvent-Contaminated Wipes.”
- On-site accumulation does not exceed 180 days.
- The wipes/containers contain no free liquids prior to transport. (Recovered free liquids, if any, must be managed in accordance with other applicable 40 CFR regulations).
- Disposal is accomplished at:
 - A municipal solid waste landfill regulated under 40 CFR 258 or a hazardous waste landfill regulated under 40 CFR 264 or 265 or
 - A municipal waste incinerator or other combustion unit regulated under Section 129 of the Clean Air Act and/or 40 CFR 264, 265 or 266.
- The generator maintains:
 - The name and address of the landfill or combustion unit receiving the wipes.
 - Documentation that the 180-day accumulation time limit is being met.
 - A description of the process used to ensure the wipes contain no free liquids at the time of transportation for disposal.

What are the benefits of using the Solvent-Contaminated Wipes Rule?

The solvent-contaminated wipes rule eases the regulatory burden and associated costs for compliant management of applicable wipes.

The Iowa Waste Reduction Center can assist your small business in complying with the Solvent-Contaminated Wipes Rule. Please contact the IWRC at 800/422-3109 for free, confidential and non-regulatory environmental assistance.