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Office of Solid Waste

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# Environmental Fact Sheet

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## COKE WASTES PROPOSED AS HAZARDOUS

*The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing to list as hazardous seven wastes from the coke by-products industry. If recycled back into the system, however, as is commonly practiced in the industry, the wastes would be exempt from regulations. EPA is requesting public comment on the proposed rule.*

### Background

Coke is a material used in the production of steel. It is derived by heating, or "carbonizing," coal in special coke ovens. This carbonization or coking process also produces crude coal tars and light oils, which are refined into many other commercial products, such as creosote for wood preserving. The wastes generated in both the coking and the tar refining processes are similar to the raw materials, and facilities typically reinsert the wastes into the coke ovens or mix them with coal tar. While these wastes contain hazardous constituents, they do not add to the toxicity of the final product or alter its quality when the wastes are recycled into the manufacturing process.

In 1980 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) identified and listed three wastes generated by the coke by-products industry as hazardous. The 1984 Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments (HSWA) require EPA to make a ruling on whether to list as hazardous additional wastes from the coke by-products industry.

### Action

EPA is proposing to list as hazardous seven categories of wastes (K141-145, K147, and K148) generated in the manufacture of coke and coke by-products. The listing would subject these wastes to regulation

under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). However, the wastes would be excluded from the definition of "solid waste" when they are recycled into the manufacturing process. Thus, the management of the wastes would be regulated only until they are placed back in the coke oven or mixed with coal tar. This exclusion from the definition of "solid waste" is consistent with other EPA rulemakings and would help to promote recycling and reuse of hazardous wastes in an environmentally responsible manner as an alternative to disposal.

Process wastewaters are not being proposed for listing as a hazardous waste. Wastewater discharge is already regulated under the effluent guidelines of the Clean Water Act.

## **Public Comment**

EPA is requesting public comment on this proposed rule. Comments should be submitted to EPA within 60 days of the publication of the *Federal Register* notice announcing this action. For instructions on submitting written comments, please see the *Federal Register* notice. It is available at no charge by calling the RCRA Hotline or by going to EPA's RCRA Information Center in Washington, D.C.

## **Contact**

For further information, or to order a copy of the *Federal Register* notice, please call the RCRA Hotline Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., EST. The national toll-free number is (800) 424-9346; for the hearing impaired, it is (TDD) (800) 553-7672. In Washington, D.C., the number is (703) 920-9810 or TDD (703) 486-3323. Or write to: RCRA Information Center, Office of Solid Waste (OS-305), U.S. EPA, 401 M Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20460.