

Epas municipal and hazardous waste programs essay

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EPA's Municipal Waste and Hazardous Waste Programs

In USA the RCRA (Resource Conservation and Recovery Act) is the major law that governs solid and hazardous waste in the environment. The three distinct programs that are implemented are solid waste, hazardous, and underground storage tanks programs (EPA). In the two programs—solid waste and hazardous—there are variations that should be clearly noted so as the environment can be well conserved.

Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) also called garbage or trash is controlled through a program with the same acronym. The goals in the program are to reduce the amount of solids, and to ensure that municipal solids are supervised in accordance to guidelines. “ In this program, garbage is considered to be common items such as food left-over, batteries, paint, newspapers, clothes, bottles, packages of products, furniture, grass clippings, and appliances all of which come from homes, hospitals, businesses, and schools (Kreith and Tchobanoglous, 2002, p. 5)”.

Furthermore, in the MSW program there is a requirement that the wastes be disposed through three major avenues which are through: landfills where waste is placed into land that contains safe guard systems that prevent underground water pollution; combustion where waste is reduced with the generation of electricity; and transfer stations where waste is briefly held before treatment or transferred to landfills (Kreith & Tchobanoglous, 2002).

In reducing these solid wastes, MSW program facilitates recycling, composting to make fertilisers, and to practice waste prevention.

Alternatively, in hazardous waste program (HW), the waste that is considered is that which is harmful both to the environment and people

(Garrette, 2004). The wastes are solid, liquid, or gases that emanate from commercial products, or by-products industrial procedures. “ Therefore under EPA hazard wastes can be classified into listed, universal, characteristic, and mixed all of which depending on procedures for waste identification (Garrette, 2004, p. 234)”. These HW are transported from site to site through highway, rail, water, or air in accordance to federal regulations and state regulations such as the manifest system.

At the treatment centre, hazardous waste are treated to reduce threat to the environment then held before release. The categories of treatment are gas discharges, permits and permitting, monitoring of ground-water, limitations of land disposal, financial assurance, closure, and clean-ups (EPA). In minimising HW the strategies advocated for are energy recovery, lean manufacturing, green chemistry, and EMS (Environmental Management Systems) (EPA).

References

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Website at:

<http://www.epa.gov/osw/>

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