

The New Universal Waste Rule's Affect on Fluorescent & Mercury Lamp Handling & Disposal

Strict federal regulations have made it difficult and expensive to properly manage used lamps, resulting in a large number of lamps being landfilled. Now the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has changed the classification of fluorescent and mercury lamps to fall under the Universal Waste Rule (UWR). These changes have been implemented to minimize recycling costs, thereby encouraging generators to properly dispose of their lamps and keeping them out of municipal landfills.

Universal Waste Rule

The EPA adopted the UWR in May, 1995 (40 CFR Part 273). At that time states were allowed to adopt their own UWRs or other local policies for lamp disposal. The EPA now includes lamps in 40 CFR 273, relieving the burden of hazardous waste regulations off of the generator.

There are several new definitions and requirements for generators or handlers of lamps created by the UWR:

Generator: anyone whose act or process produces hazardous waste items. Generators are further classified into two categories, SQHUW or LQHUW, depending on the amount of lamps they generate per year.

Transporter: one who transports UW lamps for <10 days. No EPA registration is required.

Small Quantity Handler (SQHUW): a UW handler who accumulates <5,000 kg at a time, of all universal waste at their location at any time. No EPA notification is required. Training and information on handling

mercury lamps and emergency procedures is required. Proper marking and labeling is required.

Large Quantity Handler (LQHUW): a generator or third party who accumulates >5,000 kg at a time, up to one year. EPA or state registration and ID# is required. Training and information on handling mercury lamps and emergency procedures is required. Proper marking and labeling is required.

UW Transfer Facility: a non-permitted storage location for < 10 days.

Destination Facility: a RCRA permitted facility that treats, disposes of, and/or recycles, hazardous waste.

Generators, Small Quantity Handlers, Large Quantity Handlers and Transporters have two options for disposal of hazardous lamps:

1. **Manage them as a fully regulated hazardous waste with all the RCRA requirements and the hazardous waste (HW) manifest.**
2. **Recycle them at a permitted Destination facility with reduced requirements and lower costs using a Bill of Lading.**

Basics of The Universal Waste Rule

- Households and CESQGs (<100kg/mo) may manage as a UW or via a RCRA exemption.
- Mandates LQHUW and SQHUW manage lamps in a permitted RCRA landfill with strict limitations or by recycling at a permitted Destination Facility. Recycling is the less burdensome choice because it usually does not require the generator to register with the EPA.
- If recycling is not chosen, the generator must fully comply with hazardous waste regulations. This includes registration with the EPA, use of the HW manifest and certified HW hauler, and federal and state reporting requirements for hazardous waste landfilling at RCRA Subtitle C facility. This option could greatly increase administrative, shipping and disposal costs, as well as increase the long-term liability for landfilling cleanups.
- Exempt whole lamps from the HW manifest requirements and allow the use of a Bill of Lading (BOL) for shipment if they are sent for recycling. Does not require testing or reporting of whole lamps sent for recycling.
- Allows the use of a common carrier instead of a certified hazardous waste hauler for shipment to recycling facility. This lowers shipping costs.
- Allows anyone to collect lamps if they are taken to a Destination facility. Allows generators and haulers to store lamps in any amount up to one year.
- Imposes minimal training and labeling requirements on generators and haulers.

If you have questions or want more information on recycling fluorescent and mercury lamps or the Universal Waste Rule, contact Lamp Environmental Industries at (800)309-9908 or lamprecycler@lei-inc.net.