

3. Battery Management Activities in Containment Buildings

On August 18, 1992 (57 FR 37194), EPA promulgated regulations in 40 CFR for the storage and treatment of hazardous waste in containment buildings. The regulations contain separate design and operating standards, depending on whether hazardous wastes managed in the containment building contain free liquids. Free liquids are defined as liquids which readily separate from the solid portion of a waste under ambient temperature and pressure (§260.10). If hazardous wastes containing free liquids are managed in a containment building, the owner or operator must install a secondary containment system with a liquid collection and removal system (§§264/265.1101(b)). Would management of hazardous waste batteries in a containment building require the owner or operator to provide the unit with a secondary containment system?

The owner or operator would need to provide the containment building with a secondary containment system if the batteries contain free liquids or if they are treated with free liquids. The presence of free liquids can be determined by conducting the Paint Filter Test (SW-846 Method 9095), a visual examination, or other appropriate means (57 FR 37214; August 18, 1992). Therefore, an owner or operator managing hazardous waste batteries in a containment building may conduct a visual examination to prove that the batteries do not contain free liquids (e.g., they are intact, sealed, etc.). However, an owner or operator managing batteries in a containment building in a manner that will release free liquids, such as removal of electrolyte, will be required to provide the unit with a secondary containment system and a liquid collection and removal system.