

PPC 9487.1984(05)

PLACEMENT OF BULK LIQUIDS IN LANDFILL

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MEMORANDUM

Subject: Stabilization of Bulk Liquids in Landfill Cells

From: John H. Skinner, Director
Office of Solid Waste (WH-562)

To: James H. Scarbrough, Chief
Residuals Management Branch, Region IV

I am writing in response to your request for an interpretation of §265.314(a) regarding handling of bulk liquid waste. You brought to my attention the case of a disposal facility that has been handling bulk liquids as follows: These liquids are apparently placed in a pit in the bottom of an unlined (per §264.301(a)) landfill cell. Sometime after placement the liquids are solidified with an absorbent material. After the liquids are solidified they are removed and disposed of in another portion of the landfill cell. This practice is not permitted under §265.314(a).

Discussion

§265.314(a) prohibits the placement of bulk or non-containerized liquid waste or waste containing free liquids in a landfill unless one of the following conditions is met:

1. The landfill has a liner and leachate collection and removal system that meets the requirements of §264.301(a); or
2. Before disposal, the liquid waste or waste containing free liquids is treated or stabilized, chemically or physically, so that free liquids are no longer present.

Since the liner option is not available in this case, only the second option remains. A key phrase in that option is "before

disposal." The regulatory definition of "disposal" includes the "...placing of any solid waste or hazardous waste into or on any land or water so that such solid waste or hazardous waste or any constituent thereof may enter the environment or be emitted into the air or discharged into any waters, including ground waters (§260.10)" (emphasis added). By placing liquid wastes in a pit in the bottom of an unlined landfill cell the owner or operator is "disposing" of bulk liquids. In this case, stabilization occurs after disposal, whereas §265.314(a)(2) requires treatment or stabilization before disposal. The stabilization process should occur outside the landfill cell in a tank or surface impoundment complying with applicable regulations.

Conclusion

Facilities located in your Region that may be practicing bulk liquids disposal as you described should be notified that this practice is not allowed under §265.314.

You should also make note that RCRA amendments passed by both the House and the Senate will ban the disposal of bulk liquids (with or without absorbents) in landfills six months after the effective date of the amendments.

cc: Hazardous Waste Branch Chiefs, Regions I-III, V-X

bcc: Paul Cassidy
Tony Baney (WH-527)
Terry Grogan
Peter Guerrero
Bruce Weddle
Jack Lehman
Chris Rhyne