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OFFICE OF SOLID WASTE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

OCT 31 1985

Mr. Carl J. Schafer, Jr.
Director
Environmental Policy
Acquisition and Logistics
office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Mr. Schafer:

In your letter of July 25, 1985, you requested EPA concurrence on the proposed DoD policy regarding the applicability of the RCRA hazardous waste regulations to the demilitarization of military munitions. These are munitions which have not yet been used and which now may be recycled or disposed. Your request raises two issues: 1.) are such military munitions subject to RCRA prior to demilitarization and 2.) can DoD directives be applied in lieu of RCRA requirements for treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste?

Military Munitions Subject to RCRA

RCRA Section 6001 requires federal facilities to comply with all Federal, State, and local laws pertaining to the management of hazardous waste. RCRA hazardous waste regulations apply from the time and at the point that the material (e.g., military munitions) becomes a hazardous waste. The identification of munitions subject to RCRA must be based on the definition of solid and hazardous waste as presented in 40 CFR Part 261.

Under 40 CFR §261.33, unused commercial chemical products become hazardous wastes only when discarded or intended for discard. Recycling (i.e., use, reuse, or reclamation) is ordinarily not considered to be a form of discard. Similarly, unused munitions ordinarily would not be considered to be wastes unless and until there is an intent to dispose or destroy them, and they would not be wastes when recycled in lieu of disposal. We thus agree that the mere assignment of munitions to the Special Defense Property Disposal Account does not automatically subject munitions to RCRA. It is not until DoD decides to handle the material in a manner which classifies it as a hazardous waste that its storage and

transportation must be in accordance with RCRA rules.

You should be aware, however, that burning of these munitions in military deactivation furnaces is considered to be incineration because the main purpose of the activity is waste treatment. Likewise, storage of these wastes prior to incineration would also be considered management of a hazardous waste.

The DoD strategy for identifying those munitions subject to RCRA appears to be in accordance with the RCRA regulations with the exception of the exclusion of hazardous waste storage. Your letter states that military munitions are never waste until demilitarization occurs. We interpret "demilitarization," as used in the DoD policy, to encompass all activities regulated under the RCRA rules except storage. Once there is an intention to dispose or destroy munitions, their storage as well as transportation would be regulated since they are hazardous waste. Therefore, the storage and transportation of military munitions that are hazardous waste are subject to RCRA prior to demilitarization.

RCRA Applicability to DoD

Your letter suggests that because DoD directives provide adequate protection of human health and the environment and "conform" to RCRA requirements, that DoD facilities may comply with DoD directives in lieu of the RCRA requirements. Our initial review of your directives indicates that in many respects, the DoD directives adequately address the corresponding RCRA requirements. However, we have also identified several deficiencies. For example, RCRA Subpart I §264.175 requires a containment system for container storage, whereas your directives do not. Under RCRA Subpart G §264.113, a closure plan is required for all hazardous waste facilities whether or not the facility plans to close. Your directives inaccurately state that this requirement does not apply.

Enclosed is a checklist which identifies all of the RCRA regulations promulgated prior to the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1984 (HSWA or the "Amendments"). This checklist is used by the States during the State authorization review process to determine the equivalency of State standards to RCRA requirements. We believe the checklist will be useful to you, as a first step, to identify major omissions in the DoD directives when compared to EPA's "base" (pre-HSWA) program. Unlike State programs, however, the DoD directives must do more than achieve an equivalent level of environmental protection to EPA's program. DoD facilities must meet EPA's standards promulgated under RCRA, and thus the DoD Directives would need to be revised accordingly. We would be able to

help you determine whether specific parts of RCRA apply to DoD (e.g., closure requirements).

We are currently revising the checklist to reflect the Amendments and we should be able to provide a copy of the draft revised checklist in approximately one month. The Amendments will primarily require additions to the checklist; however, a few of the current provisions of the checklist may also need to be revised slightly. Please contact Chaz Miller (382-2220) of the State Programs Branch, Office of Solid Waste, with regard to the use of the checklist and its revisions.

We are confident that the final DOD directives will facilitate the permitting of DOD facilities and should reduce the need for authorized States to impose requirements other than those prescribed in your current directives.

Sincerely yours,

Original Document signed

Jack W. McGraw
Deputy Assistant Administrator

Enclosure