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RCRA/SUPERFUND HOTLINE MONTHLY SUMMARY

JUNE 86

2. Spent Solvent Listing (§261.31)

A manufacturing facility uses a liquid-liquid extractor in its production process. An influent water stream bearing the product to be recovered contacts an influent stream of pure halogenated solvent flowing countercurrent. The solvent stream preferentially absorbs the product from the water. The solvent bearing product stream exits the extractor. Because the solvent is not completely immiscible with water, the production process yields an effluent stream consisting of water and solvent at the other end of the liquid-liquid extractor.

If the solvent used in the extraction process is a RCRA listed hazardous waste when spent, would the water/solvent effluent stream be RCRA regulated?

No; although extraction constitutes solvent use, the effluent stream is not a spent solvent covered by the spent solvent listings in §261.31 as revised on December 31, 1985 (50 FR 53315). The effluent waste water stream became contaminated with solvent during the actual production process (i.e., during use of the virgin solvent) resulting from the incomplete miscibility of water and solvent in the extraction process. It did not become contaminated as a result of spent solvent being discharged into it. It, therefore, would not be regulated as a RCRA hazardous waste, unless such waste stream were listed as a manufacturing waste in §261.32 or exhibited a characteristic in Subpart C of Part 261.

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