

EHS CONCEPTS

HAZARDOUS WASTE TOP VIOLATIONS, FIXED

The hazardous waste violations inspectors write up most at small and mid-size sites, and the leader's fix list for each. A free field guide.

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Keep your people whole.

FROM RYAN

The drum nobody owns

The examples in this letter (the drum by the paint booth, the box of lamps, the used oil tote, the inspector) are composites to show the pattern, not reports of real events.

Every small shop has one. A drum by the paint booth with a hand-written label that says "WASTE." A box of burned-out fluorescent tubes in the maintenance cage, lid open, no date. A used oil tote with no marking at all. Nobody put them there on purpose. They piled up because nobody owned them.

Then a state inspector walks in. Montana's hazardous waste program shared its numbers from three years of inspections (May 2022 to May 2025): 148 inspections, 403 violations, and violations at 63% of the sites they visited. The single most common citation was a container that did not say what hazard was inside. Seven of the top ten were labels, marks, and dates.

EPA's own national review found the same root problem one level deeper. Generators had twice as many violations tied to deciding whether a waste is hazardous as any other kind of RCRA violation. If you never decide what the waste is, every rule after that is a guess.

This guide takes the eight areas where small and mid-size generators get cited most. For each you get the pain point, what the data says, the root causes, the rules in plain words with tags, controls in hierarchy order, a printable self-audit, who owns what, and one question to start a toolbox talk.

This is the environmental side of the job, and it is still a people problem. The worker who pours solvent into an open drum breathes it. The tech who breaks a lamp handles the mercury. Start with the area you would be least comfortable showing an inspector tomorrow.

Ryan L. Rinehart

Founder, EHS Concepts — The Ways of Safety

Keep your people whole.



THE VERIFIED NUMBERS

What inspectors find at hazardous waste generators

2x

Generators had twice as many waste-determination violations as any other type of RCRA violation (EPA review of 2008–2009 compliance data)

34%

National average non-compliance rate for the hazardous waste determination rules in EPA-led inspections over 10 years (EPA evaluation, April 2013)

63%

Share of Montana DEQ hazardous waste inspections that found violations, May 2022 to May 2025 (148 inspections, 403 violations)

75

No. 1 Montana citation: containers missing an indication of the hazards of the contents, about 19% of all 403 violations*

71%

Share of all 403 Montana violations that were top-10 items for missing labels, marks, or accumulation dates (287)*

3.0

Average violations per SQG inspection in Montana (188 in 62 inspections), against 4.4 per LQG and 1.1 per VSQG inspection*

These figures are dated and partial. There is no official national top-10 list of hazardous waste generator violations. National figures come from EPA's Hazardous Waste Determination Program Evaluation, Final Report (April 2013), which analyzed inspection records in EPA's RCRAInfo database; EPA has not published a newer national figure we could verify. Ranked counts come from one state: the Montana DEQ Hazardous Waste Newsletter, Issue 5 (June 17, 2025), covering 5/14/2022 to 5/14/2025. Texas TCEQ's Dallas–Fort Worth region publishes an unranked, undated list of common issues that matches the same pattern. Your state's results will differ. * Rows marked with an asterisk are EHS Concepts calculations from the published figures.

The eight violation areas in this guide

	VIOLATION AREA	WHAT THE DATA SHOWS	MAIN FEDERAL RULE
1	Waste determination	2x any other RCRA violation (EPA); 36 Montana citations, No. 6	40 CFR 262.11
2	Hazardous waste labels and hazard marking	75 + 48 Montana citations, No. 1 and No. 3	262.15(a)(5), 262.16(b)(6)
3	Accumulation dates and time limits	37 Montana citations (No. 5); LQG over 90 days, 14 (No. 10)	262.16(b), 262.17(a)
4	Closed containers and weekly inspections	TCEQ DFW common issues No. 1 and No. 3; 24 open lamp boxes (Montana No. 9)	262.16(b)(2), 262.15(a)(4)
5	Satellite accumulation areas	On TCEQ DFW's common-issues list (55 gallons, 3 days)	262.15
6	Emergency preparedness and training	44 Montana citations, No. 4	262.16(b)(8)–(9)
7	Universal waste and used oil	151 Montana citations across four of the top 10 (Nos. 2, 7, 8, 9)*	Part 273, 279.22
8	Manifests, records, and notifications	On TCEQ DFW's common-issues list	262.18, 262.20, 262.40–.44

Order follows how the work flows (decide, label, date, store, respond, ship), not a national ranking. Montana counts are 5/14/2022–5/14/2025. The 151 in row 7 adds four Montana top-10 items (66 + 36 + 25 + 24) and is an EHS Concepts calculation.

BEFORE THE EIGHT AREAS

The five basics that sit under all eight

40 CFR 262.11 Waste determination · EPA · final	Anyone who generates a solid waste must decide accurately whether it is hazardous, at the point of generation, before mixing or dilution. SQGs and LQGs keep the records for at least three years.
40 CFR 262.13 Generator category · EPA · final	Count the hazardous waste you generate each calendar month. 100 kg (about 220 lb) or less is a VSQG; more than 100 kg and less than 1,000 kg is an SQG; 1,000 kg or more is an LQG. Acute hazardous waste has a 1 kg monthly threshold.
40 CFR 262.18 EPA ID and re-notification · EPA · final	SQGs and LQGs need an EPA ID number (Form 8700-12) before shipping waste. SQGs re-notify every four years by September 1; the next round is 2029*. LQGs re-notify by March 1 of each even-numbered year.
State authorization Your state's program · STATE · final	Most states run an EPA-authorized program and may be stricter. Some states regulate more wastes, require registration of VSQGs, or set shorter deadlines. Read your state's rules, not just the federal ones.
29 CFR 1910.1200 and 1910.120 HazCom and emergency response · GI · final	Waste is still a chemical to the worker handling it. Workers need hazard communication training, and employees who respond to releases need the emergency response training OSHA requires.

Tags: EPA = federal RCRA hazardous waste rule (40 CFR). Most states run their own EPA-authorized program, and a state rule can be stricter or broader than the federal one; your state's rule is the one an inspector cites. DOT = hazardous materials transportation (49 CFR). GI = OSHA general industry (29 CFR 1910). STATE = one state's rule or data. GUIDANCE = advisory; it is not a rule and cannot be cited by itself. Generator categories: VSQG = very small quantity generator; SQG = small quantity generator; LQG = large quantity generator.

Ten-minute foundation check

#	CHECK	YES	NO
1	We know our generator category, and we count our waste each month to confirm it.	☐	☐
2	Every waste stream on site is on a written list with a hazardous or not-hazardous decision and the basis for it.	☐	☐
3	Our EPA ID number and notification (Form 8700-12) match the site we have today: contact, category, and activities.	☐	☐
4	We have read our state's generator rules, not just the federal ones.	☐	☐
5	One named person owns the waste program, and a trained backup covers when they are out.	☐	☐
6	Every hazardous waste container on site has a label, a hazard marking, and (in central storage) a start date.	☐	☐
7	Our manifests and determination records for the last three years are in one place.	☐	☐
8	Workers who handle waste have had hazard communication training and know what to do in a spill.	☐	☐

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Walk it. Score it. Own it.

1. Start with the area you would least want an inspector to see tomorrow, not the one at the top of this guide.
2. Print the self-audit page. Walk every place waste is made or stored: process areas, maintenance, the paint booth, the lab, the dock. Thirty minutes.
3. Score what you can see or put your hand on: the label, the date, the lid, the posting. If the binder and the floor disagree, the floor is the truth.
4. Every “No” gets one owner and one date before you leave. A leaking container or an open container of flammable waste gets fixed now.
5. Walk it again in 30 days, and then weekly as part of the inspection the rule already requires.

Spotlight: your category can change in one month

THE PAIN POINT **A small shop cleans out its chemical storage room before a move. One month's waste jumps from 80 kg to 900 kg. Nobody notices that the shop just became a small quantity generator for that month.** (illustrative)

Your generator category is set by what you generate in a calendar month, not by what you usually generate (40 CFR 262.13). A cleanout, a spill, a tank cleaning, or a product recall can push a VSQG into SQG rules, or an SQG into LQG rules, with shorter time limits and more paperwork. (Source: eCFR.)

The federal episodic generation rule (40 CFR 262.230–262.233) lets a VSQG or SQG keep its usual category for one planned or unplanned episodic event per calendar year. Notify EPA at least 30 days before a planned event, or within 72 hours of an unplanned one, on Form 8700-12, and ship the waste within 60 days of the start. Not every state has adopted this option; check yours first.

- ☐ We count hazardous waste every month and compare it to our category limits.
- ☐ Cleanouts, tank cleanings, and big projects are reviewed for waste volume before they start.

USE THIS EVERY TIME

When you find a gap: the eight-step response

1. Stop or contain.	If the gap could hurt someone today (a leaking drum, an open container of flammable or toxic waste, incompatible wastes stored together, a broken lamp, a spill), stop that task and contain it now. Anyone can call it. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.
2. Fix the condition first.	Close it, label it, date it, move it, or overpack it. Then fix the paperwork so it says what is true.
3. Find the decision that allowed it.	Ask what made the condition normal: no one assigned, no labels in stock, a vendor pickup that keeps slipping, a waste stream nobody evaluated. Do not stop at “they should have known.”
4. One owner. One date.	One name, not a department. One date, not “ASAP.”
5. Verify in the field.	The owner shows the fix at the container. Re-check at the next weekly inspection and again in 30 days.
6. Look sideways.	If one container was unlabeled, check every container on site this week, including maintenance and the lab.
7. Protect the person who raised it.	Thank them and tell them what changed. Retaliation for reporting a hazard is illegal under Section 11(c) of the OSH Act, and RCRA has its own employee protection provision (42 U.S.C. 6971).
8. Get help when you need it.	Most state environmental agencies run a free, confidential small business environmental assistance program, separate from enforcement (nationalsbeap.org). For the worker safety side, OSHA's On-Site Consultation Program is free and confidential for small and mid-size employers (osha.gov/consultation).

Leaders own the conditions. Workers make choices inside the conditions we build. When a gap shows up, the first question is not “who did it?” It is “what did we build, fund, schedule, or tolerate that made this normal?”

This guide is a practical summary for planning and self-audit. It is not legal advice and does not replace the text of EPA, DOT, OSHA, or state rules. Most states run their own authorized hazardous waste programs, which may be stricter than or different from the federal rules summarized here. Regulatory text is paraphrased. When this guide and a regulation disagree, the regulation controls. Inspection figures come from EPA's 2013 national evaluation and one state's published counts; they will not match any one company's experience.

01 Waste determination: deciding what the waste is

40 CFR 262.11 [EPA] · Part 261 [EPA]

2x

waste-determination violations
versus any other RCRA violation type
(EPA, 2008–2009 data)

34%

national non-compliance rate for the
determination rules in EPA-led
inspections

36

Montana citations for failure to
determine if a waste is hazardous
(No. 6)

THE PAIN POINT **A maintenance crew switches to a new parts-washer solvent. The spent solvent goes into the same drum as the old one, under the same old label. Nobody checks whether the new waste is ignitable or carries a listed code.** (illustrative)

What the data says

Dated figures. EPA's Hazardous Waste Determination Program Evaluation (April 2013) reported that an EPA review of 2008–2009 compliance data suggested generators had twice as many violations tied to their waste determination process as any other type of RCRA violation. Across 10 years of EPA-led inspections in RCRAInfo, the national average non-compliance rate for the determination rules was 34 percent. The five sectors with the highest rates were printed circuit board manufacturing, copper foundries, hospitals, colleges and universities, and fabricated structural metal manufacturing. Montana DEQ cited failure to determine 36 times in 2022–2025, its No. 6 violation (state data).

Why it really happens

Not worker carelessness. These are the system and leadership conditions that make this predictable.

- Nobody owns the list of waste streams, so new ones are never evaluated.
- Process or product changes are made without asking what they do to the waste.
- Determinations are “we have always called it that,” with no record of the basis.
- Wastes are mixed or diluted before anyone decides what they are.
- Staff rely on the vendor to classify the waste and never check the profile.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · WASTE DETERMINATION: DECIDING WHAT THE WASTE IS

What the rules require, in plain words

262.11(a) · EPA · final	Make the determination for each solid waste at the point of generation, before dilution or mixing, and again if the waste may have changed.
262.11(b)–(c) · EPA · final	Check whether the waste is excluded, then whether it is a listed waste, using knowledge of its origin, composition, and process.
262.11(d) · EPA · final	Decide whether the waste shows a hazardous characteristic (ignitable, corrosive, reactive, toxic), by knowledge, testing, or both.
262.11(f) · EPA · final	SQGs and LQGs keep records supporting each determination for at least three years from the date the waste was last sent off.
State rules · STATE · final	Some states regulate additional wastes as hazardous or require their own waste codes. Check your state's list.

Paraphrased. Federal regulatory text checked on eCFR (current to Oct. 8, 2026) on Oct. 13, 2026. Rules shown are the federal SQG rules unless marked; authorized states may have different or additional rules. Tags: EPA = federal RCRA hazardous waste rule (40 CFR). Most states run their own EPA-authorized program, and a state rule can be stricter or broader than the federal one; your state's rule is the one an inspector cites. DOT = hazardous materials transportation (49 CFR). GI = OSHA general industry (29 CFR 1910). STATE = one state's rule or data. GUIDANCE = advisory; it is not a rule and cannot be cited by itself. Generator categories: VSQG = very small quantity generator; SQG = small quantity generator; LQG = large quantity generator.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Eliminate	Substitute a non-hazardous product (aqueous parts washer, low-VOC coatings) so the waste is not hazardous in the first place.
Engineer	Separate collection points for each waste stream so wastes are not mixed before a decision is made.
Equipment	Pre-printed container labels by waste stream, matched to the written determination.
Administrative	A written waste stream inventory with the decision, the basis (SDS, process knowledge, or lab test), and the date. Any new chemical or process change triggers a review.
Small-shop fix	Walk the site with a clipboard this week and list every waste you make. Pull the SDS for each source chemical. Ask your waste vendor for the profiles they have on file and compare.

Leaders own the conditions. If the waste program only works when one person remembers every drum, it is not a program. Build it so the label, the date, and the lid are part of the job, not a cleanup before the inspector arrives.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

01 · Waste determination: deciding what the waste is

SITE	AREA / JOB / CREW	AUDITOR	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	We have a written list of every waste stream on site.	☐	☐	☐	
2	Each stream has a hazardous or not-hazardous decision and the basis for it.	☐	☐	☐	
3	Determinations are dated and kept for at least three years.	☐	☐	☐	
4	New chemicals and process changes trigger a waste review.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Wastes are not mixed or diluted before a determination is made.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Lab results or SDS used for the decision are on file.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Our waste vendor's profiles match our own determinations.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Maintenance, lab, and cleanup wastes are on the list, not just production.	☐	☐	☐	
9	The person making determinations has been trained to do it.	☐	☐	☐	
10	We checked our state's additional waste codes or lists.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any "No" that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · WASTE DETERMINATION: DECIDING WHAT THE WASTE IS

Who owns it

Owner / GM	Assigns one person to own determinations and funds testing when needed.
Operations / maintenance lead	Reports new chemicals and process changes before the first drum fills.
Supervisor	Keeps wastes separate at the point of generation.
Workers	Put waste only in the container labeled for it and ask when a waste is new.
EHS lead	Keeps the waste stream inventory, records, and vendor profiles current.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Pick three containers at random. Find the written determination for each.
- Ask a maintenance tech what the last new chemical was. Check whether its waste was evaluated.
- Compare your waste list to the waste codes on your last three manifests.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER**What waste do we make that is not on anybody's list?**

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Stop adding to any container whose contents are unknown. Label it as waste pending determination, keep it closed, and get a decision (and a lab test if needed) with one owner and one date. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

02 Hazardous waste labels and hazard marking

40 CFR 262.15(a)(5), 262.16(b)(6), 262.17(a)(5) [EPA] · 1910.1200 [GI]

75

Montana citations for a missing indication of hazards, its No. 1 violation

48

Montana citations for a missing hazardous waste label (No. 3)

123

labeling citations from those two items alone, about 31% of all 403*

THE PAIN POINT A five-gallon pail of spent thinner sits under the bench with “WASTE” written on masking tape. The night shift does not know it is ignitable. Neither does the firefighter who finds it. (illustrative)

What the data says

State data. Montana DEQ's top two labeling items for 2022–2025 were a missing indication of the hazards of the contents (75, No. 1) and a missing hazardous waste label (48, No. 3). The hazard marking requirement was added by EPA's Generator Improvements Rule (published Nov. 28, 2016), and states adopt it on their own schedule; Montana adopted it in May 2022. Texas TCEQ's DFW region also lists unlabeled containers among its common issues.

Why it really happens

Not worker carelessness. These are the system and leadership conditions that make this predictable.

- Labels run out, so people improvise with tape and markers.
- Workers know the old “Hazardous Waste” label but not the newer hazard marking rule.
- Satellite containers are treated as too small or too temporary to label.
- Labels fade, peel, or face the wall.
- Nobody checks labels between vendor pickups.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · HAZARDOUS WASTE LABELS AND HAZARD MARKING

What the rules require, in plain words

262.16(b)(6)(i) · EPA · final	SQG containers are marked with the words “Hazardous Waste,” an indication of the hazards of the contents, and the accumulation start date.
262.15(a)(5) · EPA · final	Satellite containers are marked “Hazardous Waste” and with an indication of the hazards of the contents.
262.16(b)(6) · EPA · final	The hazard indication can be the characteristic (ignitable, corrosive, reactive, toxic), a DOT hazard label, a GHS pictogram, or an NFPA 704 label.
262.17(a)(5) · EPA · final	LQGs have the same marking requirements for containers in central accumulation.
1910.1200 · GI · final	Workers who handle waste chemicals need hazard communication training on the hazards they may be exposed to.

Paraphrased. Federal regulatory text checked on eCFR (current to Oct. 8, 2026) on Oct. 13, 2026. Rules shown are the federal SQG rules unless marked; authorized states may have different or additional rules. Tags: EPA = federal RCRA hazardous waste rule (40 CFR). Most states run their own EPA-authorized program, and a state rule can be stricter or broader than the federal one; your state's rule is the one an inspector cites. DOT = hazardous materials transportation (49 CFR). GI = OSHA general industry (29 CFR 1910). STATE = one state's rule or data. GUIDANCE = advisory; it is not a rule and cannot be cited by itself. Generator categories: VSQG = very small quantity generator; SQG = small quantity generator; LQG = large quantity generator.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Eliminate	Fewer waste streams and fewer containers mean fewer labels to miss.
Engineer	Durable pre-printed labels with “Hazardous Waste,” the hazard marking, and a date line, applied before the container goes into service.
Equipment	Label stations stocked at every point of generation, with a reorder point.
Administrative	No container goes into service without a label. Labels are part of the weekly inspection.
Small-shop fix	Buy a roll of pre-printed hazardous waste labels with hazard check boxes this week. Label every container on site in one sweep.

Leaders own the conditions. If the waste program only works when one person remembers every drum, it is not a program. Build it so the label, the date, and the lid are part of the job, not a cleanup before the inspector arrives.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

02 · Hazardous waste labels and hazard marking

SITE	AREA / JOB / CREW	AUDITOR	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	Every hazardous waste container says "Hazardous Waste."	☐	☐	☐	
2	Every container has an indication of the hazards of the contents.	☐	☐	☐	
3	Labels are legible, intact, and facing out.	☐	☐	☐	
4	Satellite containers are labeled, not just central storage drums.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Labels are stocked at every point of generation.	☐	☐	☐	
6	The hazard marking matches the written waste determination.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Workers can explain what the hazard marking on their container means.	☐	☐	☐	
8	No improvised tape or marker labels are in use.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Labels are checked during weekly inspections.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Workers who handle waste have had hazard communication training.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any "No" that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · HAZARDOUS WASTE LABELS AND HAZARD MARKING

Who owns it

Owner / GM	Funds labels and label stations; treats an unlabeled drum as a management miss.
Supervisor	Checks labels on every container in their area each week.
Workers	Never put waste in an unlabeled container; flag faded labels.
Purchasing	Keeps labels in stock.
EHS lead	Sets the label standard and trains workers on the hazard marking.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Count every waste container on site and how many have both required markings.
- Ask a worker what hazard the waste in their container poses. Compare to the label.
- Check the label station at three points of generation for stock.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

If a firefighter walked in tonight, could they tell what is in every container here?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Label any unmarked hazardous waste container now. If the contents are unknown, stop adding to it and get a determination. Name the owner and date for restocking labels. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

03 Accumulation start dates and time limits

40 CFR 262.16(b)(1)–(b)(6), 262.17(a) [EPA]

37

Montana citations for a missing hazardous waste accumulation start date (No. 5)

180

days an SQG may accumulate waste (270 if the receiving facility is 200 miles or more away)

14

Montana citations for LQGs holding waste longer than 90 days (No. 10)

THE PAIN POINT A drum in the back of the waste cage has no date. The shop thinks it was filled after the last pickup. The vendor's records say the last pickup was eight months ago. (illustrative)

What the data says

State data. Montana DEQ cited a missing hazardous waste accumulation start date 37 times (No. 5) and LQGs holding waste longer than 90 days 14 times (No. 10) in 2022–2025. The TCEQ DFW region lists missing accumulation dates among its common issues. Federal limits: an SQG may hold waste up to 180 days (270 days if the waste must travel 200 miles or more), and never more than 6,000 kg on site; an LQG up to 90 days (eCFR).

Why it really happens

Not worker carelessness. These are the system and leadership conditions that make this predictable.

- Containers are dated when they are full, not when the first drop goes in.
- Pickups are scheduled by when the vendor is in the area, not by the deadline.
- Nobody tracks the oldest container on site.
- Waste grows past the SQG limit or into LQG rules without anyone counting.
- Satellite containers are moved to storage without dating them on arrival.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · ACCUMULATION START DATES AND TIME LIMITS

What the rules require, in plain words

262.16(b)(6)(i)(C) · EPA · final	The date each accumulation period begins is marked and clearly visible on each container.
262.16(b) · EPA · final	An SQG may accumulate hazardous waste on site no more than 180 days, or 270 days if it must ship the waste 200 miles or more.
262.16(b)(1) · EPA · final	An SQG may never have more than 6,000 kg (13,200 lb) of hazardous waste on site.
262.16(d) · EPA · final	EPA may grant an extension of up to 30 days for unforeseen, temporary, and uncontrollable circumstances. Ask before the deadline, not after.
262.17(a) · EPA · final	An LQG may accumulate hazardous waste no more than 90 days.

Paraphrased. Federal regulatory text checked on eCFR (current to Oct. 8, 2026) on Oct. 13, 2026. Rules shown are the federal SQG rules unless marked; authorized states may have different or additional rules. Tags: EPA = federal RCRA hazardous waste rule (40 CFR). Most states run their own EPA-authorized program, and a state rule can be stricter or broader than the federal one; your state's rule is the one an inspector cites. DOT = hazardous materials transportation (49 CFR). GI = OSHA general industry (29 CFR 1910). STATE = one state's rule or data. GUIDANCE = advisory; it is not a rule and cannot be cited by itself. Generator categories: VSQG = very small quantity generator; SQG = small quantity generator; LQG = large quantity generator.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Eliminate	Ship more often and keep less on site; the fewer containers, the fewer dates to track.
Engineer	A single, defined central accumulation area with a visible board listing every container and its start date.
Equipment	Date-stamped labels or a simple log that sorts containers by start date.
Administrative	Book pickups by deadline. Count waste monthly against the 6,000 kg and category limits. Date satellite containers the day they move to storage.
Small-shop fix	Put a whiteboard on the waste cage: container, start date, ship-by date. Book the next pickup at least 30 days before the oldest ship-by date.

Leaders own the conditions. If the waste program only works when one person remembers every drum, it is not a program. Build it so the label, the date, and the lid are part of the job, not a cleanup before the inspector arrives.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

03 · Accumulation start dates and time limits

SITE	AREA / JOB / CREW	AUDITOR	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	Every container in central accumulation has a visible start date.	☐	☐	☐	
2	No container is older than our limit (180, 270, or 90 days).	☐	☐	☐	
3	We know the date of the oldest container on site right now.	☐	☐	☐	
4	Total waste on site is under 6,000 kg (SQG).	☐	☐	☐	
5	Pickups are scheduled by deadline, not by vendor convenience.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Satellite containers are dated the day they move to central storage.	☐	☐	☐	
7	We count our waste each month to confirm our category.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Someone backs up the waste owner during vacations.	☐	☐	☐	
9	We know how to request an extension before a deadline is missed.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Our last three pickups met the time limit.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any “No” that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · ACCUMULATION START DATES AND TIME LIMITS

Who owns it

Owner / GM	Funds pickups often enough to meet the limit, even when the drum is not full.
EHS lead	Tracks start and ship-by dates and books pickups.
Supervisor	Dates containers when they enter central storage.
Workers	Report full satellite containers the same day.
Purchasing	Keeps the waste vendor contract current and responsive.

How to verify it is working in the field

- List every container in central storage with its start date. Find the oldest.
- Compare start dates on the last three manifests to the ship dates.
- Ask who books the pickup if the waste owner is out for two weeks.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER**What is the oldest container in our waste area, and when does it have to go?**

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Date any undated container now, using the best evidence available, and record how you estimated it. If a limit has passed, book an urgent pickup and talk to your state agency. Name the owner for the tracking board. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

04 Closed containers and weekly inspections

40 CFR 262.15(a)(4), 262.16(b)(2) [EPA]

No. 1

issue on TCEQ DFW's common-issues list: no weekly inspection of container storage

No. 3

on the same list: containers left open when not adding or removing waste

24

Montana citations for open universal waste lamp containers (No. 9)

THE PAIN POINT A funnel sits in the bung of a solvent drum all shift because taking it out is a hassle. The room smells like solvent by noon. Nobody has signed the weekly inspection log since spring. (illustrative)

What the data says

State data, undated. Texas TCEQ's DFW region lists failure to conduct weekly inspections of the container storage area first and failure to close containers third among the alleged violations its investigators observe often (the list cites older federal section numbers from before the 2016 Generator Improvements Rule). Montana DEQ cited open universal waste lamp containers 24 times (No. 9) in 2022–2025.

Why it really happens

Not worker carelessness. These are the system and leadership conditions that make this predictable.

- Funnels are left in drums because closing them takes effort.
- Weekly inspections are paperwork that slides when the owner is busy.
- Inspections are signed without anyone looking at the containers.
- Incompatible wastes are stored side by side because space is tight.
- Damaged or rusting containers stay in use because a new drum was not ordered.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · CLOSED CONTAINERS AND WEEKLY INSPECTIONS

What the rules require, in plain words

262.16(b)(2)(iv) · EPA · final	At least weekly, inspect central accumulation areas for leaking containers and deterioration caused by corrosion or other factors.
262.16(b)(2)(iii) · EPA · final	Keep containers closed during accumulation except when adding or removing waste, and do not handle them in a way that could cause a rupture or leak.
262.15(a)(4) · EPA · final	Satellite containers are closed at all times except when adding, removing, or consolidating waste, or when temporary venting is needed for safety or equipment operation.
262.16(b)(2)(i)–(ii) · EPA · final	Move waste out of a leaking or damaged container immediately, and use containers compatible with the waste.
262.16(b)(2)(v) · EPA · final	Do not mix incompatible wastes in one container or put waste in an unwashed container that held an incompatible material, and separate incompatible containers with a dike, berm, wall, or other device.

Paraphrased. Federal regulatory text checked on eCFR (current to Oct. 8, 2026) on Oct. 13, 2026. Rules shown are the federal SQG rules unless marked; authorized states may have different or additional rules. Tags: EPA = federal RCRA hazardous waste rule (40 CFR). Most states run their own EPA-authorized program, and a state rule can be stricter or broader than the federal one; your state's rule is the one an inspector cites. DOT = hazardous materials transportation (49 CFR). GI = OSHA general industry (29 CFR 1910). STATE = one state's rule or data. GUIDANCE = advisory; it is not a rule and cannot be cited by itself. Generator categories: VSQG = very small quantity generator; SQG = small quantity generator; LQG = large quantity generator.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Eliminate	Fewer, consolidated waste containers in one well-designed area.
Engineer	Self-closing drum funnels with latching lids, secondary containment, and segregated bays for incompatibles.
Equipment	Bung wrenches and spare drums staged in the area; overpack drums for damaged containers.
Administrative	A weekly inspection checklist that names what to look at, signed by the person who looked, with misses fixed on the spot.
Small-shop fix	Buy a latching drum funnel for every active liquid waste drum. Tape the weekly checklist to the cage door and put the inspection on the supervisor's calendar.

Leaders own the conditions. If the waste program only works when one person remembers every drum, it is not a program. Build it so the label, the date, and the lid are part of the job, not a cleanup before the inspector arrives.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

04 · Closed containers and weekly inspections

SITE	AREA / JOB / CREW	AUDITOR	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	Every hazardous waste container is closed right now unless someone is adding or removing waste.	☐	☐	☐	
2	Funnels on liquid drums are latching or are removed after each use.	☐	☐	☐	
3	The central accumulation area was inspected in the last seven days and the log is signed.	☐	☐	☐	
4	The inspection log names what was checked, not just a signature.	☐	☐	☐	
5	No container is leaking, bulging, or badly rusted.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Containers are compatible with the waste inside.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Incompatible wastes are separated by a barrier or distance.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Overpack drums and spill supplies are in the area.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Problems found in inspections are fixed and recorded.	☐	☐	☐	
10	A trained backup does the inspection when the owner is out.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any “No” that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · CLOSED CONTAINERS AND WEEKLY INSPECTIONS

Who owns it

Owner / GM	Funds latching funnels, containment, and replacement drums.
Supervisor	Does or verifies the weekly inspection and fixes what is found.
Workers	Close the container every time and report leaks or damage.
EHS lead	Sets the inspection checklist and audits it monthly.
Maintenance	Repairs containment and replaces damaged containers.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Walk every waste area unannounced and count open containers.
- Read the last eight weekly logs. Check whether issues found were fixed.
- Ask the person who signed the log to show you what they look for.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

What would make it easier to close the drum every time?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Close any open container now. Move waste from a leaking or damaged container to a sound one. If the weekly inspection was missed, do it today and name a backup inspector. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

05 Satellite accumulation areas

40 CFR 262.15 [EPA]

55 gal

maximum non-acute hazardous waste in a satellite area (1 quart liquid or 1 kg solid acute)

3 days

consecutive calendar days to move or properly manage any excess

2016

year EPA's Generator Improvements Rule rewrote the satellite rules (published Nov. 28, 2016)

THE PAIN POINT A lab collects waste in a closet down the hall from where it is made. Six drums later, the “satellite area” is really an unpermitted storage room with no dates, no inspections, and no one in charge. (illustrative)

What the data says

State data, undated. Texas TCEQ's DFW region lists failure to properly maintain satellite accumulation areas among its common issues, including waste moved from one satellite area to another, excess over 55 gallons not dated and moved within three days, and containers not marked. There is no published national count for this violation that we could verify; it is included because it is the doorway to several others on Montana's list (labels and hazard marking).

Why it really happens

Not worker carelessness. These are the system and leadership conditions that make this predictable.

- Satellite areas are set up for convenience, away from the point of generation.
- No one owns the area, so it fills past 55 gallons.
- Workers think satellite containers do not need labels.
- Full containers sit for weeks waiting for someone to move them.
- The 2016 Generator Improvements Rule added new requirements that older programs never picked up.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · SATELLITE ACCUMULATION AREAS

What the rules require, in plain words

262.15(a) · EPA · final	Up to 55 gallons of non-acute hazardous waste (or 1 quart liquid or 1 kg solid acute waste) may accumulate at or near any point of generation, under the control of the operator of the process.
262.15(a)(4)–(5) · EPA · final	Containers are closed and marked “Hazardous Waste” with an indication of the hazards of the contents.
262.15(a)(6) · EPA · final	When waste exceeds the limit, mark the excess with the date it began, and within three consecutive calendar days move it to central accumulation or comply with central accumulation rules.
262.15(a)(1)–(3) · EPA · final	Use containers in good condition and compatible with the waste, and keep incompatible wastes apart.
262.15(a)(7) · EPA · final	SQG satellite areas also meet the preparedness, prevention, and emergency procedure rules in 262.16(b)(8)–(9).

Paraphrased. Federal regulatory text checked on eCFR (current to Oct. 8, 2026) on Oct. 13, 2026. Rules shown are the federal SQG rules unless marked; authorized states may have different or additional rules. Tags: EPA = federal RCRA hazardous waste rule (40 CFR). Most states run their own EPA-authorized program, and a state rule can be stricter or broader than the federal one; your state's rule is the one an inspector cites. DOT = hazardous materials transportation (49 CFR). GI = OSHA general industry (29 CFR 1910). STATE = one state's rule or data. GUIDANCE = advisory; it is not a rule and cannot be cited by itself. Generator categories: VSQG = very small quantity generator; SQG = small quantity generator; LQG = large quantity generator.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Eliminate	Combine satellite areas so each process has one, and remove areas that are not at the point of generation.
Engineer	A defined, marked satellite station at each process with secondary containment and a container sized to the waste rate.
Equipment	Labels, latching funnels, and spill supplies stocked at each station.
Administrative	A map of every satellite area with an owner. Full containers are dated and moved within three days.
Small-shop fix	Put a laminated card at each satellite station: what goes in, the 55-gallon limit, “date it and call [owner] when full.”

Leaders own the conditions. If the waste program only works when one person remembers every drum, it is not a program. Build it so the label, the date, and the lid are part of the job, not a cleanup before the inspector arrives.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

05 · Satellite accumulation areas

SITE	AREA / JOB / CREW	AUDITOR	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	Every satellite area is at or near the point of generation.	☐	☐	☐	
2	Each satellite area is under the control of the process operator.	☐	☐	☐	
3	We have a list or map of every satellite area.	☐	☐	☐	
4	No satellite area holds more than 55 gallons (or the acute limit).	☐	☐	☐	
5	Satellite containers are closed and marked "Hazardous Waste" with the hazard.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Full containers are dated and moved within three consecutive calendar days.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Waste is not moved from one satellite area to another.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Containers are compatible with the waste and in good condition.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Spill supplies and a way to call for help are near each area.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Each area has a named owner.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any "No" that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · SATELLITE ACCUMULATION AREAS

Who owns it

Owner / GM	Approves where satellite areas may be set up.
Process supervisor	Owens the satellite area in their process and moves full containers.
Workers	Use the right container, keep it closed, and call when it is full.
EHS lead	Maintains the satellite area map and audits each area monthly.
Lab or maintenance lead	Applies the same rules to lab and shop satellite areas.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Walk to each satellite area on the map. Look for any that are not on it.
- Check whether the operator can see the area from where the waste is made.
- Look for full containers. Check the date and how long they have been full.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER**Where do we keep waste that is not where it is made, and who watches it?**

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Move any excess over 55 gallons to central accumulation within three days, dated. Close and label containers now. Relocate any satellite area that is not at the point of generation. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

06 Emergency preparedness and training

40 CFR 262.16(b)(8)–(9) [EPA] · 49 CFR 172.704 [DOT] · 1910.120 [GI]

44

Montana citations for emergency preparedness violations, its No. 4 violation

3

items an SQG must post next to telephones or in waste areas

90 days

for new hazmat employees to complete DOT training (then every 3 years)

THE PAIN POINT **A drum tips and splits on second shift. The posted emergency coordinator left the company last year. The spill kit is empty, and the closest extinguisher is behind a pallet.** (illustrative)

What the data says

State data. Montana DEQ cited emergency preparedness violations 44 times in 2022–2025, its No. 4 violation. Texas TCEQ's DFW region lists failure to attempt arrangements with local authorities, and for LQGs missing contingency plans and training job descriptions, among its common issues. SQGs do not need a written contingency plan under federal rules, but they do need a coordinator, postings, equipment, and trained workers (eCFR).

Why it really happens

Not worker carelessness. These are the system and leadership conditions that make this predictable.

- The posted coordinator's name is out of date.
- Spill kits are used and never restocked.
- Workers were never told what to do in a spill or fire.
- No one ever called the fire department to tell them what is stored on site.
- Training is a one-time video instead of a walk-through of the real area.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND TRAINING

What the rules require, in plain words

262.16(b)(9)(i)–(ii) · EPA · final	At least one employee on site or on call is the emergency coordinator. Post next to telephones or in waste areas the coordinator's name and number, the location of extinguishers, spill material, and alarm, and the fire department number.
262.16(b)(9)(iii) · EPA · final	Make sure all employees are thoroughly familiar with proper waste handling and emergency procedures for their jobs.
262.16(b)(8) · EPA · final	Have an alarm or communication system, a phone or radio to summon help, extinguishers, spill control and decon equipment, and adequate water, where needed. Test and maintain them, keep aisle space clear, and attempt arrangements with local responders.
49 CFR 172.704 · DOT · final	Employees who prepare hazardous waste for shipment or sign manifests are hazmat employees: train them within 90 days of hire or job change, retrain at least every three years, and keep records.
1910.120(q) · GI · final	Employees who respond to hazardous substance releases need emergency response training at the level of their role. Workers who only clean up small incidental spills are handled differently.

Paraphrased. Federal regulatory text checked on eCFR (current to Oct. 8, 2026) on Oct. 13, 2026. Rules shown are the federal SQG rules unless marked; authorized states may have different or additional rules. Tags: EPA = federal RCRA hazardous waste rule (40 CFR). Most states run their own EPA-authorized program, and a state rule can be stricter or broader than the federal one; your state's rule is the one an inspector cites. DOT = hazardous materials transportation (49 CFR). GI = OSHA general industry (29 CFR 1910). STATE = one state's rule or data. GUIDANCE = advisory; it is not a rule and cannot be cited by itself. Generator categories: VSQG = very small quantity generator; SQG = small quantity generator; LQG = large quantity generator.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Eliminate	Keep less hazardous waste on site, and store it where a spill cannot reach a drain.
Engineer	Secondary containment, curbed storage, and drain covers in waste areas.
Equipment	Stocked spill kits sized to the largest container, extinguishers in sight, and a phone or radio at each waste area.
Administrative	Current coordinator posting, a spill drill each year, a letter or meeting with the local fire department, and DOT training for anyone who signs a manifest.
Small-shop fix	Update the emergency posting today. Restock the spill kit and add a checklist inside the lid. Invite the fire department for a 30-minute walk-through.

Leaders own the conditions. If the waste program only works when one person remembers every drum, it is not a program. Build it so the label, the date, and the lid are part of the job, not a cleanup before the inspector arrives.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

06 · Emergency preparedness and training

SITE	AREA / JOB / CREW	AUDITOR	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	A current emergency coordinator is named and reachable at all times.	☐	☐	☐	
2	The required posting (coordinator, equipment locations, fire department number) is next to phones or in waste areas.	☐	☐	☐	
3	Spill kits are stocked and sized for the largest container.	☐	☐	☐	
4	Extinguishers and alarms are accessible, inspected, and tested.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Aisle space allows responders and equipment to reach every container.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Workers who handle waste can describe what to do in a spill or fire.	☐	☐	☐	
7	We have attempted arrangements with the local fire department and documented them.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Anyone who signs a manifest has current DOT hazmat training (every three years).	☐	☐	☐	
9	Workers who respond to spills are trained at the right level.	☐	☐	☐	
10	We have run a spill drill in the last year.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any “No” that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND TRAINING

Who owns it

Owner / GM	Names the coordinator and funds spill equipment and training.
Emergency coordinator	Keeps postings current, leads drills, and responds to incidents.
Supervisor	Makes sure each shift knows the plan and keeps aisles clear.
Workers	Know the spill procedure. Stop and leave an unsafe release; that is expected on this site.
EHS lead	Tracks training, including DOT, and coordinates with local responders.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Call the posted emergency coordinator number. See who answers.
- Open the spill kit. Compare the contents to its checklist.
- Ask a worker on second shift what they would do if a drum split.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

If a drum split right now, who would you call and what would you grab?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Update the posting and restock the spill kit today. Clear blocked aisles and extinguishers now. Name the owner and date for the fire department contact and drill. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

66

Montana citations for a missing accumulation start date on universal waste, its No. 2 violation

36

Montana citations for a missing “Used Oil” label (No. 7)

1 year

maximum time a small quantity handler may accumulate universal waste

THE PAIN POINT Burned-out lamps go in the cardboard box they came in, open, in the maintenance cage. Used oil goes in a tote with no marking. The shop thinks this is the easy, low-rule stuff. (illustrative)

What the data says

State data. Universal waste and used oil were four of Montana's top 10 in 2022–2025: missing accumulation start date on universal waste (66, No. 2), missing used oil label (36, No. 7), missing label on universal waste lamps (25, No. 8), and open lamp containers (24, No. 9). Together that is 151 of 403 violations, about 37%*. Texas TCEQ's DFW region also lists universal waste labeling and dating among its common issues. Universal waste rules are simpler than full hazardous waste rules, but they are still rules.

Why it really happens

Not worker carelessness. These are the system and leadership conditions that make this predictable.

- Universal waste is treated as “not really hazardous waste.”
- Lamps and batteries are collected in whatever box is handy.
- Nobody dates the box when the first item goes in.
- Used oil containers are reused from other products and never relabeled.
- Maintenance owns these wastes, but the waste program sits with someone else.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · UNIVERSAL WASTE AND USED OIL

What the rules require, in plain words

273.14 · EPA · final	Label universal waste or its container. Lamps: "Universal Waste—Lamp(s)," "Waste Lamp(s)," or "Used Lamp(s)." Batteries: "Universal Waste—Battery(ies)," "Waste Battery(ies)," or "Used Battery(ies)." Aerosol cans and other types have their own phrases.
273.15 · EPA · final	Accumulate universal waste no longer than one year, and be able to show how long it has been there, such as a date on the container.
273.13(d) · EPA · final	Keep lamps in closed, structurally sound containers that prevent breakage, and clean up broken lamps right away.
273.16 · EPA · final	Inform all employees who handle universal waste of proper handling and emergency procedures.
279.22 · EPA · final	Mark used oil containers and aboveground tanks "Used Oil," keep them in good condition and not leaking, and stop, contain, and clean up any release.

Paraphrased. Federal regulatory text checked on eCFR (current to Oct. 8, 2026) on Oct. 13, 2026. Rules shown are the federal SQG rules unless marked; authorized states may have different or additional rules. Tags: EPA = federal RCRA hazardous waste rule (40 CFR). Most states run their own EPA-authorized program, and a state rule can be stricter or broader than the federal one; your state's rule is the one an inspector cites. DOT = hazardous materials transportation (49 CFR). GI = OSHA general industry (29 CFR 1910). STATE = one state's rule or data. GUIDANCE = advisory; it is not a rule and cannot be cited by itself. Generator categories: VSQG = very small quantity generator; SQG = small quantity generator; LQG = large quantity generator.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Eliminate	Switch to LED lighting and longer-life equipment so fewer lamps and batteries become waste.
Engineer	Purpose-made lamp boxes and battery pails with lids at a single collection point; used oil in a labeled, contained tank or drum.
Equipment	Pre-printed universal waste and used oil labels, and a date line on every collection container.
Administrative	The first item in sets the date. Ship universal waste at least every year. Add these containers to the weekly inspection.
Small-shop fix	Buy one lidded lamp box, one battery pail, and a roll of labels. Mark the used oil tote today. Write the start date on each container now.

Leaders own the conditions. If the waste program only works when one person remembers every drum, it is not a program. Build it so the label, the date, and the lid are part of the job, not a cleanup before the inspector arrives.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

07 · Universal waste and used oil

SITE	AREA / JOB / CREW	AUDITOR	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	Universal waste lamps are in closed, sound containers.	☐	☐	☐	
2	Lamp containers are labeled with an approved phrase.	☐	☐	☐	
3	Battery containers (or each battery) are labeled with an approved phrase.	☐	☐	☐	
4	Every universal waste container shows the date the first item went in.	☐	☐	☐	
5	No universal waste is more than one year old.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Used oil containers and tanks are marked "Used Oil."	☐	☐	☐	
7	Used oil containers are in good condition and not leaking.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Broken lamps are cleaned up and contained right away.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Employees who handle universal waste know the handling and emergency steps.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Universal waste and used oil containers are on the weekly inspection.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any "No" that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · UNIVERSAL WASTE AND USED OIL

Who owns it

Owner / GM	Funds LED conversion and proper collection containers.
Maintenance lead	Owens lamp, battery, and used oil collection and labeling.
Supervisor	Checks that collection containers are closed, labeled, and dated.
Workers	Put items in the right container, close the lid, and report broken lamps.
EHS lead	Schedules pickups at least yearly and keeps shipping records.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Walk the maintenance shop and cage. Count lamp boxes, battery pails, and oil containers that are closed, labeled, and dated.
- Find the oldest universal waste container. Check its date.
- Ask a maintenance tech what to do with a broken lamp.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER**Where do our burned-out lamps, dead batteries, and used oil actually end up?**

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Close, label, and date every universal waste container now, using the best estimate for the start date. Mark used oil containers today. Name the owner and date for the next pickup. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

08

Manifests, records, and notifications

40 CFR 262.18, 262.20, 262.40, 262.42(b), 262.44, 268.7 [EPA] · 49 CFR 172.704 [DOT]

60 days

for an SQG to receive the signed manifest back before it must file an exception report

3 years

minimum retention for manifests and waste determination records

2029

next SQG re-notification year, due by Sept. 1*

THE PAIN POINT The waste vendor emails a manifest to sign. The person who signs it has never been trained, does not check the waste codes, and nobody ever looks for the final signed copy from the disposal facility. (illustrative)

What the data says

State data, undated. Texas TCEQ's DFW region lists incorrectly completed manifests, missing follow-up on signed manifests, missing waste determinations and classifications, and out-of-date notifications of registration among its common issues. Federal rules require a manifest (EPA Form 8700-22) for off-site shipments and, under 262.20(a)(1), registration of SQGs and LQGs in EPA's e-Manifest system to obtain signed copies, since Jan. 22, 2025; VSQGs are not required to register (Source: eCFR; e-Manifest Third Rule, 89 FR 60692). There is no published national count for these violations that we could verify.

Why it really happens

Not worker carelessness. These are the system and leadership conditions that make this predictable.

- Manifests are signed by whoever is at the dock when the truck arrives.
- The generator trusts the vendor to fill out the manifest correctly.
- Nobody tracks whether the signed copy came back from the disposal facility.
- Records are scattered across email, paper, and the vendor's portal.
- The site's notification still lists a contact who left years ago.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · MANIFESTS, RECORDS, AND NOTIFICATIONS

What the rules require, in plain words

262.20 · EPA · final	Ship hazardous waste off site on a Uniform Hazardous Waste Manifest (EPA Form 8700-22). SQGs and LQGs register with EPA's e-Manifest system to obtain signed and dated copies (since Jan. 22, 2025; VSQGs are not required to register).
262.40 and 262.44 · EPA · final	Keep a copy of each signed manifest for at least three years from the date the initial transporter accepted the waste. Waste determination records are also kept three years. The periods extend during enforcement.
262.42(b) · EPA · final	If an SQG has not received the signed copy from the receiving facility within 60 days, send a copy of the manifest to EPA or the state with a note that confirmation was not received.
262.18 · EPA · final	Have an EPA ID number before shipping. SQGs re-notify every four years by September 1 (2021, 2025, next 2029*). LQGs re-notify by March 1 of each even-numbered year.
268.7 · EPA · final · 172.704 · DOT · final	Send the land disposal restrictions notice with the initial shipment of each waste where required, and make sure anyone who signs a manifest has DOT hazmat training.

Paraphrased. Federal regulatory text checked on eCFR (current to Oct. 8, 2026) on Oct. 13, 2026. Rules shown are the federal SQG rules unless marked; authorized states may have different or additional rules. Tags: EPA = federal RCRA hazardous waste rule (40 CFR). Most states run their own EPA-authorized program, and a state rule can be stricter or broader than the federal one; your state's rule is the one an inspector cites. DOT = hazardous materials transportation (49 CFR). GI = OSHA general industry (29 CFR 1910). STATE = one state's rule or data. GUIDANCE = advisory; it is not a rule and cannot be cited by itself. Generator categories: VSQG = very small quantity generator; SQG = small quantity generator; LQG = large quantity generator.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Eliminate	Fewer, consolidated shipments mean fewer manifests to get right.
Engineer	Use EPA's e-Manifest system so signed copies are tracked electronically.
Equipment	One shared folder or binder for manifests, determinations, notifications, and training records.
Administrative	Only trained, named people sign manifests. A tracking log with a 30-day and 60-day follow-up on every shipment. A calendar reminder for re-notification.
Small-shop fix	Start a one-page shipment log today: date shipped, manifest number, date signed copy received. Check it on the first of every month.

Leaders own the conditions. If the waste program only works when one person remembers every drum, it is not a program. Build it so the label, the date, and the lid are part of the job, not a cleanup before the inspector arrives.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

08 · Manifests, records, and notifications

SITE	AREA / JOB / CREW	AUDITOR	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	Only trained, named people sign manifests.	☐	☐	☐	
2	Manifest signers have current DOT hazmat training.	☐	☐	☐	
3	We check waste codes on each manifest against our determinations before signing.	☐	☐	☐	
4	Every shipment has a signed copy back from the receiving facility, or an exception report filed.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Manifests are kept at least three years.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Our site is registered in EPA's e-Manifest system.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Our EPA ID notification shows the current contact, category, and activities.	☐	☐	☐	
8	SQG re-notification is on the calendar for September 1, 2029.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Land disposal restrictions notices are on file for each waste stream.	☐	☐	☐	
10	All waste records are in one place someone else could find.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any "No" that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · MANIFESTS, RECORDS, AND NOTIFICATIONS

Who owns it

Owner / GM	Limits manifest signing to trained, named people.
EHS lead	Keeps the shipment log, e-Manifest account, and notifications current.
Dock or shipping lead	Never signs a manifest without training and a check of the codes.
Purchasing	Holds the waste vendor to accurate manifests and timely signed copies.
Workers	Hand manifests to the named signer instead of signing themselves.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Pick the last five shipments. Find the signed copy from the receiving facility for each.
- Check the training record of the last person who signed a manifest.
- Look up your site in EPA's records and compare to your current contact and category.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER**Who signed our last manifest, and what did they check before they signed?**

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

For any shipment over 60 days with no signed copy, call the vendor and file the exception report. Pull manifest signing from untrained staff today. Name the owner for the shipment log and re-notification. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

CHECK OUR WORK

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FREE FIELD TOOL · NEXT STEP

ONE WALK. SEVEN MINUTES.

The free 7-Minute Safety Walk is a one-page field tool. Pick one area where waste is made or stored. Look at every container: label, hazard marking, date, lid. Then ask the person who works there what they would do if it leaked. It is the fastest way to find out whether the fixes in this guide are working at your site today.

Get the free 7-Minute Safety Walk →

thewaysofsafety.com/walk



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