

AMWTP

Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project

RCRA and the AMWTP

Words You Should Know

Hazardous waste:

Under RCRA, the meaning of this term is defined in several pages of regulations and lists of substances designated as hazardous. Generally speaking, hazardous waste is toxic or harmful to human health or the environment.

Notice of Deficiency (NOD):

An agency request for more information or suggested changes to a permit application. Several NODs are usually generated during review, which may take a year or more to complete.

Settlement Agreement:

A court-ordered agreement among the State of Idaho, DOE, and the Navy. Under the Settlement Agreement, DOE must ship out the transuranic waste stored at INEEL's Transuranic Storage Area (TSA) by a target date of the year 2015 and no later than 2018. According to the Agreement, after January 1, 2003, a running average of no fewer than 2,000 cubic meters per year will be shipped out of Idaho.

Stakeholder:

Any person or organization interested in or affected by a project.

Trial Burn:

Part of the RCRA permitting process for an incinerator. During a trial burn, the incinerator is run under the expected operating conditions to help establish (and verify) operating requirements (such as waste feeds, temperature, limits on stack emissions) that are protective of the environment.

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) was enacted to promote responsible storage, treatment, and disposal of hazardous wastes. Through RCRA, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates such waste from the time it's generated until it's finally disposed of—cradle to grave management. In Idaho, the Division of Environmental Quality is responsible for enforcing RCRA regulations. Because the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project (AMWTP) will treat mixed waste, which contains radioactive and hazardous compounds, we must obtain a RCRA permit from the Division of Environmental Quality before we can start construction of the facility. That permit will set requirements that must be followed during operations and establish provisions for decontaminating and closing the facility when it is no longer useful.

Mixed Waste and RCRA

Until the Federal Facilities Compliance Act was passed in 1992, RCRA regulations did not apply to Federal facilities that manage mixed waste. The Act changed that, and required the Department of Energy (DOE) to develop a Site Treatment Plan for each of its sites. The main purpose of these plans was to identify the technology and types of facilities needed to treat mixed waste at a site.

DOE signed a Consent Order with the State of Idaho, a legally-binding commitment to abide by the Site Treatment Plan prepared for the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL). The AMWTP is an essential part of that Plan—and also of the **Settlement Agreement**, which established deadlines for constructing a treatment facility. But before construction can begin, the AMWTP must obtain a permit that describes how the facility will comply with RCRA regulations.

The Permit Application

A RCRA permit application is a long and complex document. It covers every aspect of a proposed facility, including the engineered components (such as technology, operation, maintenance, closure plans) and the environment (weather, geology, air, etc.). The permit application must provide enough information to assure the permitting agency that the facility will be protective of human health and the environment.

An application is submitted in two parts. Part A is a form that records basic information about the facility—address, ownership, a listing of waste to be treated, and so forth. Part B is organized into books that detail the major functional areas of the proposed facility. The AMWTP Part B application will be hundreds of pages long, in four books. The *General Facility Book* will discuss infrastructure and activities common to all parts of the AMWTP complex (like roads, electricity, waste characteristics, training, safety and security) and plans for closing the facility at the end of its useful life. The *Pretreatment Process Book* (box and drum sorting lines), *Nonthermal Treatment Process Book* (supercompaction and macroencapsulation), and the *Thermal Treatment Process Book* (incineration and vitrification) will contain process-

See the EPA fact sheet *The Hazardous Waste Facility Permitting Process* for more information on the RCRA permitting process. Other AMWTP fact sheets provide more detail on the proposed facility.

You Have A Role

Hazardous waste management affects all of us in some way or another. You may be concerned about protecting the environment, interested in how tax dollars will be used, wondering about potential risks from the proposed facility—or other issues. The BNFL Inc. Team recognizes the legitimacy of such interest and the importance of informing and including stakeholders throughout the process of permitting, constructing, and operating the AMWTP. We encourage you to contact us or the Idaho Division of Environmental Quality during the RCRA permitting process—and after—if you have questions or concerns, or if you would like more information.

- Get on our mailing list
- Request information materials
- Review and comment on the draft permit.

specific information on waste characteristics, procedures to prevent hazards, and the technology and operations to be used for those processes.

After we submit the application to the Division of Environmental Quality for review and revision and fully respond to notices of deficiency (NOD), the Division will decide to issue a permit or deny the application.

What are "Subparts?"

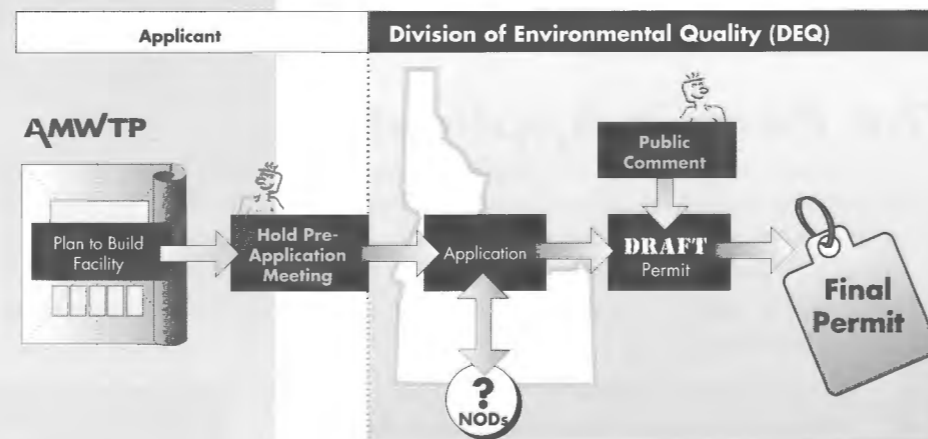
RCRA requires that hazardous waste be stored safely and treated to reduce the toxicity and mobility of hazardous chemicals before disposal. The regulations are written out in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), which is divided into Chapters, Parts, Subparts, and Sections. A permit application for a planned facility may cover several distinct treatment or storage units, regulated under different Subparts. The AMWTP permit application will include units regulated under various Subparts of 40 CFR 264, including Subpart I—Use and Management of Containers, Subpart O—Incinerators, and Subpart X—Miscellaneous Units (such as the macroencapsulator and supercompactor). The permitting agency can issue (or deny) a permit for some or all of the units.

Public Participation

Under RCRA, the permit applicant (that's BNFL Inc. for the AMWTP) is required to hold a pre-application public meeting. Unlike a public hearing, the purpose of this meeting is not to gather comments in a formal setting, but rather an informal occasion to introduce the project, elicit public concerns, and give interested parties an opportunity to get on the project's mailing list. At some time during the permit process, the permitting agency can request the applicant to establish an information repository, where the public can go to read about the project.

When the permit application is submitted to the permitting agency—in this case, the Idaho

Division of Environmental Quality—the agency takes over most of the responsibility for RCRA public participation. It sends a notice to everyone on the mailing list to announce the application and report where it is available for public review. When the agency makes a preliminary decision to issue a draft permit or deny the application—usually after an extensive review and revision process—it sends another letter to the mailing list, places notices in the local paper, and announces the decision over the radio.



That starts a 45-day public comment period, during which stakeholders can request a public hearing on the decision. The Agency must also prepare a fact sheet explaining the main facts about the facility and the permit. As part of the decision process, the Agency must consider public comments submitted in writing or at the hearing, respond to them, and specify any changes made to the draft permit.



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**For General Information on the AMWTP Please Call
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United States
Department of Energy



For More Information or to Get on the AMWTP Mailing List—Call, Write, or Visit Us

Idaho Division of Environmental Quality, AMWTP RCRA Contact:

Brian Monson, Idaho Division of Environmental Quality, 1410 North Hilton, Boise, ID 83706 (208) 373-0502

AMWTP Information Repository

at the Department of Energy Public Reading Room, located in the library at University Place, 1776 Science Center Drive, Idaho Falls (208) 526-9162. Open Monday through Friday, 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.

AMWTP Project:

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EPA Mixed Waste Internet Site:

<http://www.epa.gov/radiation/mixed-waste/>