

December 15, 2004

WASTE MINIMIZATION AND COMPLIANCE REPORT (RCN 10-99-904)

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive provides information for reporting data to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Office of the Federal Environmental Executive, and the Agency Environmental Executive on waste categories, such as: volume, environmental compliance, procurement, and initiatives. *NOTE: This Directive eliminates multiple reporting in VHA.*

2. BACKGROUND

a. The Federal Pollution Prevention Act formally establishes Pollution Prevention (P2) as a national objective, and defines P2 as source reduction and other practices that reduce or eliminate the creation of pollutants. This act establishes a hierarchy of environmental protection consisting of prevention or source reduction, recycling, treatment, and disposal into the environment. The most desirable method of pollution abatement is prevention or source reduction. Disposal or other releases into the environment should be done only as last resort, and then in an environmentally safe manner.

b. The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), as amended by the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1984, covers the generation, treatment, storage, disposal, and transportation of both hazardous and non-hazardous waste and emphasizes source reduction as the highest priority. RCRA requires the “cradle-to-grave” management of hazardous waste (HW), encourages recycling and reuse, and further requires HW generators to certify that the generator has a program in place to “reduce the volume or quantity and toxicity” of waste. The 1992 Federal Facilities Compliance Act (FFCA) makes Federal facilities subject to Federal, State and local waste management and disposal laws and regulations. RCRA also mandates Federal procurement of recycled products.

c. The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) provides for adequate response should the release of hazardous materials occur. It further mandates emergency planning efforts at State and local levels, and provides residents and local governments with access to information concerning potential chemical hazards and emissions present in their communities.

d. Executive Order (EO) 13101, Greening the Government Through Waste Prevention, Recycling, and Federal Acquisition, directs each Federal agency to set measurable goals for recycling and solid waste reduction, and requires specific means for Affirmative Procurement of recycled and “environmentally preferable” products. This EO stresses the hierarchy of environmental protection: source reduction, recycling, treatment, and disposal.

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e. EO 13148, Greening the Government Through Leadership in Environmental Management, directs each Federal agency to develop and implement agency and facility environmental management systems, as well as to periodically conduct facility environmental compliance audits. The goal of the EO is to achieve significant reductions in toxic chemicals, hazardous substances, and other pollutants by utilizing source reduction as the single most important means of pollution prevention.

f. VHA Policy Manual, M-1, Part VII, Chapter 14, establishes the policy concerning the scope and responsibility of waste management in VHA facilities. The identification, collection, handling, containment, transport, storage, reduction, treatment, and disposal of all health care facility generated wastes constitute the Waste Management Program. The Waste Management Program must be effectively managed to prevent adverse impact on the environment. This policy encourages the establishment of a Waste Management Committee and provides guidance on the identification of the facility waste stream components, as well as waste minimization strategies.

g. Under Secretary for Health Memorandum, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Section 6002, Environmental Goals, establishes specific measurable environmental goals for VHA in waste prevention, recycling, and acquisition of recovered materials in VHA for target years 2000, 2005, and 2010.

3. POLICY: It is VHA policy that all facilities must: fully comply with all Federal, State, and local environmental regulations; maintain an effective pollution prevention and an Affirmative Procurement Program; and accurately monitor environmental compliance in waste management issues.

4. ACTION

a. **Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Directors.** VISN Directors must ensure that VHA facilities include in their Green Environmental Management System (GEMS) the following: *NOTE: Pending development and implementation of GEMS, VISN Directors are responsible for ensuring that policy, procedure, guidance, etc., are in place at VHA facilities as necessary to accomplish the following tasks.*

(1) Assessing the facility to determine the quantity and composition of the facility's waste streams and pollution prevention opportunities.

(2) Collecting data on waste generation, disposal costs, recycling, procurement of environmentally preferable products, and other environmental data, as required.

(3) Naming the VHA facility organizations(s) and individual(s) responsible for the Waste Minimization Report.

(4) Submitting the requested data Report Control Number (RCN) 10-99-904, Waste Minimization and Compliance Report, to Environmental Program Service (181C) at VA Central

Office, Washington, DC, no later than close of business January 15 for the preceding Fiscal Year.

b. **The Chief Facilities Management Officer.** The Chief Facilities Management Officer (18) must:

(1) Maintain and update generation and cost data through RCN 10-99-904, the Waste Minimization and Compliance Report, for the following environmental topical areas:

- (a) Solid and Regulated Medical Waste.
- (b) Hazardous Waste.
- (c) Radioactive Waste.
- (d) Recycling Activities.
- (e) Procurement of Recycled Products (RCRA, Section 6002).
- (f) Other environmental aspects as necessary.

(2) Publish an annual report based upon the data collected from the preceding fiscal year.

(3) Determine if there are national trends requiring redress.

(4) Provide for the periodic review of report data and follow-up with the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N).

(5) Develop recommendations for any necessary corrective action to the Under Secretary for Health.

5. REFERENCES

a. Pollution Prevention Act of 1990, Public Law (Pub. L.) 101-508, as amended by Pub. L. 102-389 (1992).

b. Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, as amended, Title 42 United States Code (U.S.C) 6901 et seq.; Federal Facility Compliance Act, 42 U.S.C. 6961.

c. Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986, 42 U.S.C. 11001 et seq.

d. Executive Order 13101, Greening the Government Through Waste Prevention, Recycling, and Federal Acquisition, 63 Federal Register (Fed. Reg.) 49643 (Sept. 16, 1998).

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e. Executive Order 13148, Greening the Government Through Leadership in Environmental Management, 65 Fed. Reg. 24595 (April 26, 2000).

f. M-1, Part VII, Chapter 14, Waste Management, dated September 14, 1994.

g. Under Secretary for Health Memorandum, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Section 6002, Environmental Goals, dated April 5, 1999.

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: Director, Environmental Programs Service (181C) is responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions may be addressed to 202-565-8525.

7. RECISSION: VHA Directive 99-037 is rescinded. This Directive expires December 31, 2009.

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