



Fact Sheet

Universal Waste Aerosol Can Management

Universal waste is a subcategory of hazardous waste, widely produced by households and many types of businesses. Examples include batteries, fluorescent lamps, pesticides and aerosol cans. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency developed a streamlined management program for universal waste because these items are relatively low-risk and extremely common.



Who is affected?

Facilities that generate or accumulate universal waste are called universal waste handlers and are subject to specific management standards depending on the type and amount of universal waste accumulated. All universal waste handlers may manage waste aerosol cans as either universal waste or hazardous waste. Those handlers who follow universal waste rules must adequately manage and ship waste aerosol cans to appropriate destination facilities.

Key Benefits



Less stringent rules – Aerosol cans managed as universal waste do not count toward hazardous waste generator status.



Less paperwork – No need for manifests, hazardous waste determinations or land disposal restrictions when following universal waste rules.



Longer accumulation times – Generators may store waste aerosol cans in closed containers for up to one year.



Simplified labeling – Less stringent labeling requirements on containers storing universal waste.

What changed?

Aerosol cans managed as universal waste are not subject to the full Resource Conservation and Recovery Act requirements and are exempt from 40 CFR Parts 260 through 268 if managed as required by this rule.

Puncturing rules

Although not required, the universal waste aerosol can rule allows puncturing of aerosol cans before disposal if the handler of the cans meets the conditions of [40 CFR 273.13\(e\)\(4\)](#) or [273.33\(e\)\(4\)](#). These include but are not limited to: Following a written procedure for safely puncturing cans, conducting a hazardous waste determination on all contents, puncturing the cans with a device designed for that purpose, handling waste from punctured cans safely and recycling the metal.

	Waste aerosol cans managed as Universal Waste	Waste aerosol cans managed as Hazardous Waste
Container requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Store in structurally sound containers. • Compatible with contents. • Lacks evidence of leaks, spills or damage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must store aerosol cans in closed containers. • Compatible with contents. • Lacks evidence of leaks, spills or damage.
Shipping requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shipping papers or bill of lading. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ship waste aerosol cans off-site under manifest.
Accumulation times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One year for all generators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ninety days for large quantity generators. • Either 180 or 270 days for small quantity generators, depending on the distance to the disposal facility.
Labeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Label containers with the words "Universal Waste" and include an accumulation start date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Label containers with the words "Hazardous Waste" and include an accumulation start date and hazardous waste codes.

Why was the rule created?

Businesses widely use aerosol cans to dispense various products, including paints, solvents, pesticides, food, personal care items, and many others. This change will likely reduce regulatory costs for many facilities, including the retail sector, generating and managing aerosol cans by providing a clear, protective system for handling hazardous waste aerosol cans. Additionally, this rule aims to improve recycling and reduce the cost and burden of waste aerosol can management.

The aerosol can universal waste regulations will:

- Ease regulatory burdens on retail stores and others that discard aerosol cans.
- Promote the collection and recycling of aerosol cans.
- Encourage the development of municipal and commercial programs to reduce the quantity of this waste going to municipal solid waste landfills or combustors.

Where to find more information?

Find the complete regulations for properly managing waste aerosol cans as universal waste in 40 CFR 273.6 or Oregon Administrative Rule 340-100-0002.

Have questions?

DEQ has made it easy to get your questions answered. To learn more and request free, non-regulatory technical assistance, please visit oregon.gov/deq/Hazards-and-Cleanup.

Alternate formats

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