

9441.1992(16)

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, D.C. 20460
Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response

June 11, 1992

Mr. Douglas H. Green
Piper & Marbury
1200 Nineteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036-2430

Dear Mr. Green:

Thank you for your letter of April 30, 1992, requesting clarification of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) interpretation of the applicability of certain Resource conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) requirements to common excavation-type activities.

The particular situation which you presented in your letter involves excavation of soils, such as trenching operations for pipeline installation, where the soils may be hazardous by characteristic, or may contain listed hazardous wastes. We understand that your questions specifically relate to excavations being conducted on public roadways or at other similar locations that are not necessarily associated with or are part of a RCRA regulated treatment, storage, or disposal facility.

In the example which you cited in your letter, the soils from the excavation or construction activities are temporarily moved within the area of contamination, and subsequently redeposited into the same excavated area. In these situations, we agree that such activity does not constitute treatment, storage, or disposal of a hazardous waste under RCRA. The activity of placing waste in the ground would not normally meet the regulatory definitions of "treatment" or "storage" (40 CFR 260.10). In addition, as you noted in your letter, movement of wastes within an area of contamination does not constitute "land disposal" and thus does not trigger RCRA hazardous waste disposal requirements (55 FR 8666, March 8, 1990). Thus, RCRA requirements such as land disposal restrictions would not apply.

RO 11671

With respect to generator requirements, as you indicated, a hazardous waste "generator" is one, by site, who produces a hazardous waste or first causes the waste to be regulated as hazardous (40 CFR 260.10). In the circumstances you described, the excavation does not "produce" the hazardous waste, nor does it subject the waste to hazardous waste regulation since, as discussed above, the activity you described is not "treatment," storage, or "land disposal" of hazardous waste. Therefore, we agree that the activity is not subject to any generator requirements.

Please let me know if you have any further questions regarding this issue.

Sincerely yours,
Sylvia K. Lowrance, Director
Office of Solid Waste