

9441.1986(94)

MIXED RADIOACTIVE HOSPITAL WASTES AND THE DOMESTIC SEWAGE
EXCLUSION

DEC 19 1986

Mr. Robert Blackmon
2500 Clay Street
Paducah, Kentucky 42001

Dear Mr. Blackmon:

This letter responds to your inquiry regarding the regulatory status of radioactive and chemical wastes from hospital laboratories that are discharged to the sewer system.

EPA does not regulate radioactive wastes, per se. These wastes are regulated by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). However, certain low level mixed radioactive wastes that are land disposed or incinerated (e.g., scintillation cocktails containing hazardous chemicals such as xylene or toluene) are regulated under the EPA hazardous waste regulations (see Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 261). You may contact NRC directly at (202) 492-7000, for detailed information on the disposal of radioactive wastes. Also, in some cases, radioactive wastes from hospitals are regulated by the State or local department of health. You may contact these agencies for more specific information.

Several of the chemicals you listed are regulated under the Federal hazardous waste regulations (i.e., the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, as amended (RCRA)). There is, however, an exemption from RCRA regulation for any mixture of domestic sewage and other wastes that passes through a sewer system to a publicly-owned treatment works (POTW) for treatment, although these wastes may still be regulated on a State or local level. POTW's are regulated under the Clean Water Act, which sets the general criteria for wastes that may be discharged to a POTW.

To gain a better understanding of the Federal regulations covering hazardous wastes, I suggest that you consult Part 261 of Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) which can be obtained from the Government Printing Office (at 202-275-3648) or perhaps your school library. I have enclosed the lists of chemicals

that are regulated under the Federal hazardous waste regulations (i.e., 40 CFR 261.31, 261.32, and 261.33).

You also may be interested in a recent publication entitled "Report to Congress on the Discharge of Hazardous Waste to Publicly Owned Treatment Works," (February, 1986). It is available through the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) for \$34.95. (To order, call NTIS at (703) 487-4650 and give the title and order number -- PB86-184017/AS).

For any specific questions concerning chemical wastes, you may call the RCRA/Superfund Hotline (toll-free) at (800) 424-9346. If you have further questions, contact Mitch Kidwell of my staff at (202) 382-4805.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Sales, Chief
Regulation Development Section

Enclosures