



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

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www.pca.state.mn.us

December 16, 2009

TO: Health Care Providers

RE: Compliance with Hazardous Waste Regulations

Many health care facilities in our State are not aware that state and federal hazardous waste regulations dictate management and disposal requirements for pharmaceuticals and other chemicals. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you about the work the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is doing to help health care facilities meet these requirements.

The MPCA is partnering with the Minnesota Technical Assistance Program (MnTAP), a non-regulatory pollution prevention program at the University of Minnesota, to continue the state-wide Health Care Initiative (Initiative) the MPCA and metropolitan county hazardous waste programs began in 2002. All Minnesota hospitals and surgery centers either have been, or are currently being, brought into compliance with state and federal hazardous waste rules through direct regulatory inspections.

This stage of the Initiative is focused on compliance assistance and pollution prevention for dental clinics, long-term care facilities, medical clinics, pharmacies, and veterinary practices. It consists of Web-based guidance materials (now available), Webcasts and workshops held in various locations around the State (available January to June 2010), and an online self-assessment (available April to July 2010). These resources may be accessed at www.mntap.umn.edu/healthcarehw/index.html. The guidance materials, Webcasts, and workshops are tools to help prepare for the self-assessment, which provides waste reduction guidance and an opportunity to self-disclose and correct violations. It is designed to help facilities comply with the hazardous waste rules without direct regulatory intervention. Completion of the self-assessment, and correction of any deficiencies, will qualify most health care facilities for the Green Star award.

This is an opportunity for you to obtain valuable assistance during a fixed timeframe dedicated to bringing your facility, and others like it, into full compliance with hazardous waste regulations. MnTAP's assistance can reduce waste and the burden of regulatory compliance. Beginning October 2010, all health care facilities will be subject to full enforcement of hazardous waste regulations, including the possibility of financial penalties for noncompliance. The seven metropolitan county hazardous waste programs (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, Washington) may already fully regulate hazardous waste in all health care facilities. Facilities in these counties are still encouraged to access the on-line resources and participate in the self-assessment.

I sincerely hope you take advantage of this opportunity to voluntarily ensure compliance as it is the responsibility of health care facilities to comply with all regulatory requirements for managing hazardous waste. If you have questions regarding hazardous waste regulatory compliance, please contact Brandon Finke by telephone at 651-757-2358 or by e-mail at brandonfinke@state.mn.us. If you have questions regarding waste reduction, please contact Catherine Zimmer by telephone at 612-624-1300 or by e-mail atzimme053@umn.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Eger".

Paul Eger
Commissioner

PE/BF:ch