

Hazardous Waste Program by Tim Cawthon

Improperly managed hazardous waste poses a serious threat to human health and the environment. The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), passed in 1976, was established to set up a framework for the proper management of hazardous waste.

WHAT IS HAZARDOUS WASTE?

Simply defined, hazardous waste is a waste with properties that make it dangerous or capable of having a harmful effect on human health or the environment. Hazardous waste is generated from many sources of industrial manufacturing, maintenance activities, and construction activities. Hazardous waste may come in many forms including liquid, solid, gas, or sludge. The EPA developed a regulatory system that identifies substances known to be hazardous. A substance is deemed hazardous waste based on the risks of ignitability, corrosivity, toxicity, and reactivity.

EXAMPLES:

Ignitable substances: fuels, paints, solvents, and gases such as propane, and hydrogen

Corrosive substances: acids such as sulfuric acid and bases such as sodium hydroxide

Toxic substances: lead, arsenic, cadmium, and chromium-containing substances

Reactive substances: explosives, lithium batteries

The Environmental Division's Base Hazardous Waste Accumulation Site (BHWAS) along with Shop-Level Coordinators (SLC) are tasked with proper management, transportation and disposal of hazardous waste generated by military activities at MCBH. The BHWAS ensures that hazardous wastes are managed from "Cradle to Grave,"—from the initial point of generation until it is sent to an EPA-permitted Treatment Storage and Disposal Facilities (TSDF).

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Find out who your SLC is and follow the established procedures for hazardous waste management. If you do not have a SLC or have questions call the BHWAS at 257-9913.

Activity: Got eco-friendly tips for disposing of hazardous waste at home like lithium batteries and used oil? (Hint: find info on the MCBH Environmental Division's website at: <https://www.mcbhawaii.marines.mil/Offices-Staff/S-4-Installations-Environment-Logistics/Environmental/> . Comment below. Random drawings for prizes will be held when social distancing measures have been lifted.

Mālama i ka 'āina—care for and live in harmony with the land. Earth Day every day.