



Guidance for Return Collection Facilities (RCFs)

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1. Introduction

Effective August 1, 2023, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV) made changes to the Hazardous Waste Regulation (HWR). The intent of the changes was to better facilitate the diversion and recycling of moderate risk waste and make it more practical and financially viable for northern and remote communities to collect, transport and dispose of moderate risk waste (MRW). MRW is hazardous waste generated by products sold by a retailer that are designed for use in domestic activities at residences and is described in more detail below. MRW may be generated from households, institutions, or commercial businesses.

Return collection facilities (RCFs) are facilities that collect MRW from generators such as members of the public. There are updated requirements for RCFs that collect and store MRW. The purpose of this document is to outline requirements to help RCFs comply with the updated regulation.

Requirements for return to retail collection facilities (RCFs located at retail stores), consolidation site facilities and temporary collection events are described in separate guidance below:

[Return to retail collection facility guidance](#)

[Consolidation site facility guidance](#)

[Temporary collection event Guidance](#)

This document is intended for guidance only; in the case of omissions or discrepancies, the *Environmental Management Act* and the Hazardous Waste Regulation apply.

1.1. Moderate Risk Waste

“Moderate risk waste” is hazardous waste that is:

- in a “product category” as prescribed in the [Recycling Regulation](#) or,
- any of the following wastes if designed for domestic use:
 - diesel fuel
 - pressurized refillable propane cylinders with a water capacity that than 109 L
 - pressurized, non-refillable cylinders that are less than 455 g
 - pressurized, non-refillable helium cylinders
 - handheld fire extinguishers
 - animal deterrents containing capsaicin
 - aerosols
 - household cleaners and household disinfectant products

MRW does not include e-waste, which is hazardous waste within electronic and electrical product category of the Recycling Regulation. The collection, storage and transport of e-waste is subject to exemptions from the HWR as outlined in section 7.



2. Requirements for Return Collection Facilities (RCFs)

2.1. Registration

All RCFs must register with ENV, regardless of the amount of hazardous waste that is collected and stored at the facility.

If a facility was registered as a generator before August 1st, 2023, re-registration as a RCF is not required. If the facility is already registered as a registered site, it may continue to operate as such and retain its registered site number.

Registration forms can be submitted by completing the online registration form on the ENV's website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=CCFC390820E6414F87866E3EAE6CAD10>

If an organization has more than one facility, each facility must be registered by completing a separate registration form. The certifying person may be an employee or an agent of the facility.

Registration must be submitted within 30 days of establishing a facility. If there is any significant change in any of the information that was initially submitted, an updated Form 1 must be completed and emailed to BCGregistrations@gov.bc.ca or faxed to 250-356-0299.

2.2. Siting

RCFs are exempt from siting requirements in the HWR. However, a RCF cannot be set up or operate within protected wildlife areas such as designated parks, wildlife preserves, or sanctuaries.

2.3. Security and Signage

A RCF must be equipped with a suitable access security system to prevent unauthorized access by persons or by animals unless the RCF only stores:

- a maximum of 150 kg of lead-acid batteries; or
- a maximum of 5,000 L of waste oil or antifreeze combined, under the condition that the RCF is operated by local government, an Indigenous Nation, a producer or an agent of any of those and the facilities' containers are secure (e.g., locked).

A RCF must have a sign at each entrance to the RCF which identifies that it is a RCF and specifies:

- the hours of operation;
- the categories of hazardous waste, as described in Schedule 6, collected at the RCF and, if applicable, any appropriate safety warnings;
- the name and telephone number of the owner of the RCF;
- a 24-hour emergency contact number; and,
- a prohibition against leaving materials outside the collection area of the RCF.

2.4. Contingency Plan

A RCF must develop and keep current a contingency plan which documents procedures to follow during emergencies that at a minimum includes:

- shut down procedures;



- communication networks to be used;
- notification procedures, for:
 - police departments in the vicinity;
 - fire departments in the vicinity;
 - emergency response teams;
 - ambulance and medical services;
 - contractors carrying on business in the vicinity;
 - schools, hospitals, and residents in the vicinity; and
 - federal, Provincial, and municipal governments.
- evacuation procedures for facility staff;
- abatement measures; and,
- inventories of spill response and cleanup equipment available
 - at the facility;
 - from contractors carrying on business in the vicinity;
 - from agencies operating in the vicinity; and,
 - from regional suppliers.

The RCF must also:

- appoint one person and at least one alternate to act as an Emergency Response Coordinator with authority to carry out action in accordance with the contingency plan;
- provide a copy of the contingency plan to the Emergency Response Coordinator and each alternate Emergency Response Coordinator;
- provide clean up equipment, sorbents and other material and protective equipment and clothing, for all emergency response staff at the facility, appropriate for all the hazardous waste managed at the facility; and,
- Make the contingency plan available for inspection by an officer¹.

3. Operational Requirements

3.1. Institutional and Commercial Generators

RCFs must collect MRW from residential sources. They may also collect MRW from institutional and commercial generators but are not allowed to provide service to industrial generators.

3.2. Waste That is not Moderate Risk Waste

Hazardous waste that is not MRW or e-waste may exhibit additional hazards that require expertise to manage. A RCF may collect such wastes if the following requirements are met:

¹ An officer is a person or class of persons employed by the government, a government corporation or a municipality and designated in writing by a director as an officer, or a conservation officer.



- The waste is generated by residences and not other sources such as institutional, commercial, or industrial sources.
- An operational plan for collecting and handling hazardous waste that is not MRW or e-waste must be developed and implemented at the facility and submitted to ENV.

3.3. Submitting an Operational Plan

Operational plans are to be submitted to ENV at envauthorizationsreporting@gov.bc.ca. The following should be included in your submission:

- the subject line of the email containing the facilities' registration number, the year of the operational plan and the words "OP Plan" (e.g. **BCG00011 2024 OP Plan**);
- the registration number in the heading must include at least 5 digits; and,
- attachments in PDF format and if your attachment(s) are too large to be received via email, please provide a download link the body of the email.

Once submitted, you can expect to receive a response confirming your submission has been received. Processing of your submission may take 2-4 weeks. Once your submission has been accepted and placed on file by ENV, you can expect a second email confirm this has been completed. Operational plans for RCFs are not required to be reviewed by ENV.

3.4. Unknown or Unlabelled Waste

Unknown or unlabelled waste may be accepted at a RCF if the following conditions are met:

- the waste is classified and labelled in accordance with the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations (TDGR) by:
 - a person employed at a registered site (often referred to as a hazardous waste management company); or
 - a qualified professional.
- an operational plan for managing this waste was developed by a person employed at a registered site or a qualified professional and the RCF has taken necessary steps to implement the plan; and
- a person employed at a registered site, or a qualified professional has assessed whether the waste has appropriate means of containment, is stored appropriately and is labelled in accordance with the TDGR.

3.5. Consolidation of Waste

RCFs are able to accept waste that was first received at another RCF for the purposes of consolidation. See sections 5.1 and 5.2 for requirements for license to transport and manifests.

3.6. Training and Records

Each person employed at an RCF must be adequately trained in:

- the handling of each specific hazardous waste handled by that person and accepted at the RCF; and,
- the contingency plan(s) applicable to the RCF.



Training records must be retained by the owner of the RCF and at least one person employed at the RCF must be adequately trained in the handling of all hazardous wastes accepted at the RCF.

An operating record with the following information must be kept for a minimum of two years after the hazardous waste has been removed from the RCF:

- a description of each type of hazardous waste including the name and, if applicable, the product identification number, classification and packing group number as described in the TDGR;
- a statement whether the hazardous waste is a solid, liquid or gas or a combination of two or more of these states; and,
- a record, updated at least weekly, of the quantity, in kg or L, of either:
 - each type of hazardous waste in storage at the RCF; or
 - the total capacity of in-use containers on site.

A weekly inspection of the facility must be made for any irregularities including malfunctions, container damage, leaks and spills which may lead to the escape of the hazardous waste from the facility or may pose a threat to human health or the environment. A record of inspections conducted at the facility must be maintained and include the following:

- any irregularities at the RCF and the date the irregularities were discovered; and,
- the corrective action taken and the date the action was taken.

3.7. Limitations and Prohibitions

Facilities that operate in compliance with the requirements that apply to RCFs cannot collect or manage batteries, other than lead-acid batteries that are 5 kg or larger that are not contained within equipment without an operational plan. These facilities are also not able to manage the following wastes:

- lighting fixtures or capacitors that contain PCB;
- batteries from vehicles that require insurance or licensing other than lead-acid batteries; or
- vehicles that require insurance or licensing.

4. Storage Requirements

The maximum quantity of all hazardous waste in storage must not exceed 25,000 kg or 25,000 L at any time and the quantity of waste oil must not exceed 5,000 L. There must be adequate clearance between containers stored at the facility to permit a visual inspection of the containers for leaks and spills; however, this requirement does not apply to primary product containers if they are within secondary means of containment (such as a tub skid, drum, or labpack).

All means of containment including tanks and containers must:

- be maintained in good condition with no apparent structural defects;
- have no signs of visible leakage; and,
- have legible labels and markings (i.e., TDGR labelling requirements where applicable).

Hazardous waste must be handled in a manner that:

- protects the waste from damage;
- protects the waste from being adversely affected by elements of the weather;



- ensures the waste is not stored in standing water;
- prevents exposure of hazardous substances to the public; and,
- results in delivery to an authorized facility.

Hazardous waste must not be placed in an unwashed container that previously held a material which is incompatible with that hazardous waste or allow incompatible wastes to come into contact with each other. Facilities that store ignitable or reactive waste must include precautions in their contingency plan to prevent reactions which may do any of the following:

- generate extreme heat or pressure, fire or explosions;
- produce uncontrolled toxic mists, fumes, dusts or gases in sufficient quantities to threaten human health or the environment;
- produce uncontrolled flammable fumes or gases in sufficient quantities to pose a risk of fire or explosion; or
- damage the structural integrity of the facility.

If hazardous waste is stored indoors, the RCF must have a suitable controlled forced air ventilation system. At least one fire extinguisher compatible with the types of hazardous waste collected and stored at the facility must be available for use.

4.1. Spill Containment

Only passive storage and pouring from one means of containment to another is permitted at a RCF. Pouring from one means of containment to another must be done over an impervious surface and all tanks and containers must remain closed, unless being actively filled or the contents are being emptied. Hazardous waste must be handled in a manner that prevents a spill or release to the environment and must always be kept contained.

The following needs to be available for all hazardous waste managed at the facility:

- sorbents and other clean up equipment;
- protective equipment and clothing for all emergency response staff at the facility; and,
- a spill kit capable of dealing with spills of all types of wastes collected and stored at the RCF.

If waste that contains liquids is stored in a container that does not serve as a secondary means of containment, the facility's storage area must be located within an impervious spill containment system sufficient to hold 110% of the largest volume of liquid hazardous waste in any given container or tank.

4.2. Spill Reporting

If a spill occurs, or is at imminent risk of occurring, responsible persons (spillers) must ensure that it is immediately reported to the Provincial Emergency Program/ Emergency Management British Columbia by calling 1-800-663-3456. This is known as the Initial Report or Dangerous Goods Incident Report.

A spill is defined by the *Environmental Management Act* as the introduction into the environment, other than as authorized and whether intentional or unintentional, of a substance or thing that has the potential to cause adverse effects to the environment, human health, or infrastructure.

The Initial Report must be completed by the responsible person (spiller) if:



- The quantity of the spill is equal to or greater than the quantity outlined in [the schedule of the Spill Reporting Regulation](#) for a specific substance; or
- The spill has impacted, or might impact, a body of water.

More information on requirements for reporting a spill can be found on ENV's website:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/spills-environmental-emergencies/report-a-spill>

4.3. Requirements for Discharges to the Environment, Storm Sewer or Treatment Works

A RCF must not discharge, into the environment, a storm sewer or a municipal or industrial effluent treatment works, effluent produced by the operation of the RCF unless the discharge meets the effluent standards prescribed in Schedule 1.2 of the HWR. Local governments may also have limits on what can be discharged to sewer.

5. Shipping Requirements

5.1. Licence to Transport

In most cases, a license to transport is required to transport of hazardous waste. However, a transport licence is not required if one or more of the following situations apply:

- the hazardous waste is carried solely on a property controlled by the person storing or generating the waste;
- the hazardous waste is carried by the person who generated it or operators of a RCF and the amount is less than the registration quantity (Schedule 6 of the HWR);
- the hazardous waste is not carried by road;
- the MRW is generated within a national, Provincial, regional, or municipal park and is transported directly to an authorized facility by an employee or agent of the park; or
- when transporting MRW:
 - the waste is a dangerous good under the TDGR and the transporter meets the TDGR requirements;
 - the transporter has \$5 million in third party liability and maintains a current contingency plan;
 - the waste is being managed under an approved extended producer responsibility plan;
 - for lead-acid batteries, the waste is being transported from a RCF to a facility of a producer of lead-acid batteries as long as the RCF shipping the batteries is not operated by a producer of lead-acid batteries; or
 - for all other MRW, the waste is being transported from a RCF to an authorized facility, consolidation site facility or another RCF.
- a manifest is not required (as outlined below).

5.2. Manifests

Unless the transport is exempt from manifests (as outlined below), a manifest is needed when transporting any type of hazardous waste above the following quantities, including MRW:



- 5 kg or more of solid waste;
- 5 L or more of liquid waste;
- gaseous waste in containers having a total liquid capacity of 5 L or more;
- 210 L or more of waste oil;
- any quantity of solid or liquid waste containing 500 g or more of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB);
- 1,000 kg or more of waste lead-acid batteries; or
- 210 L or more of waste paint.

A manifest is not required if the hazardous waste, including MRW is transported:

- solely within the boundaries of property owned, leased, or controlled by the person who produces or stores the waste, as long as the distance between the shipping and receiving sites is less than 100 km;
- for a distance less than 3 km on a public road;
- directly from a home or farm, by a homeowner or farmer, to a RCF; or
- MRW generated within a national, Provincial, regional or municipal park that is transported directly to an authorized facility by an employee or agent of the park.

There are additional exemptions specific to MRW. A person is also exempt from needing a manifest when transporting MRW if *all* the following conditions are met:

- the transport is exempt from a license to transport (see section 5.1)
- a uniquely numbered shipping document compliant with the TDGR accompanies the shipment;
- the shipping document also has the following fields completed that are optional under the TDGR:
 - **consignor** (generator) name, phone number, registration number, email address, mailing and shipping site address, and signature;
 - **consignee** (receiver) name, phone number, registration number, email address, mailing and shipping site address, scheduled arrival date;
 - **carrier** name, phone number, vehicle registration number, email address, and province or territory, mailing address, and signature; and,
 - shipping document number.
- The following information is added to the shipping document following receipt:
 - time and date of receipt by consignee;
 - quantity received by consignee; and
 - consignee signature.



6. Lead-acid Batteries

A used or spent lead-acid battery is hazardous waste as soon as the user no longer has any use for in its current condition, regardless of whether it is being returned it directly to a producer² of batteries, as defined in the Recycling Regulation.

A waste lead-acid battery is not hazardous waste only *after* it has been refurbished by a producer and is suitable for reuse.

6.1. Specific Exemptions

If a RCF only stores quantities not exceeding 150 kg of lead-acid batteries at any time and the batteries are managed under an approved extended producer responsibility plan:

- the facility is not required to maintain the following in an operating record:
 - a description of each hazardous waste;
 - a statement as to whether the hazardous waste is a solid, liquid or gas or a combination of two or more; and
 - the quantity of each type of hazardous waste in storage.
- the facility does not require access security to prevent unauthorized access by individuals or animals; and,
- the facility is not required to have signs at each entrance that identifies it as a RCF and does not need to specify the information required under Section 42.3(2)(a) and (b).

6.2. Storage

A RCF that stores and collects lead-acid batteries must:

- develop and implement a written plan to safely handle leaking or damaged lead-acid batteries;
- not store lead-acid batteries in stacks more than five batteries high;
- not store, stack, or otherwise handle lead-acid batteries in such a manner that terminals come into contact one another; and,
- store leaking batteries in leak-proof means of containment .

Powdered neutralizer proactively placed at the bottom of a lead-acid battery box can fulfil the requirement for a spill kit.

6.3. Shipping to Receivers

All waste batteries may only be sent to an authorized consignee (also known as a registered site or an authorized hazardous waste management facility), RCF, return to retail collection facility or consolidation

² The following web site provides a list of qualified Recycling Regulation producers for lead-acid batteries: <http://recyclemybattery.ca/british-columbia>



site facility. All parties involved in managing, generating, transporting and receiving these batteries must meet all applicable requirements under the HWR.

7. E-waste

E-waste is a hazardous waste that is in the electronic and electrical product category of the Recycling Regulation.

7.1. Specific Exemptions

Limited requirements of the HWR apply to the storage and transportation of e-waste if the conditions in this section are met. In some situations, ENV may require compliance with sections of the HWR that do not typically apply to the storage and transportation of e-waste.

The exemptions and requirements that apply to the storage and transport of e-waste do not apply to the following waste batteries:

- unsealed lead-acid batteries;
- sealed lead-acid batteries that are 5 kg or larger; and,
- any other batteries that are 5 kg or larger that are not contained within equipment or a device.

7.2. Requirements

E-waste must be managed in accordance with an approved extended producer responsibility plan and be stored and handled in a manner that:

- protects the waste from damage;
- protects the waste from being adversely affected by elements of the weather;
- ensures the waste is not stored in standing water; and,
- prevents the exposure of hazardous substances to the public.

The facility managing e-waste must prepare and maintain a contingency plan for the management of e-waste that consists or contains one or more of the following:

- lithium or lithium-ion batteries;
- waste lightbulbs containing mercury;
- switches containing mercury; or
- glass containing lead.

The contingency plan of the facility must include:

- procedures to prevent breakage or other damage to the waste during collection and transport; and
- procedures for handling the waste in the event of breakage or other damage.

The facility must also retain a record of all shipments of e-waste leaving the facility for a period of at least 2 years.



7.3. Waste Lightbulbs Containing Mercury

The exemptions to the HWR that apply to e-waste also apply to mercury containing lightbulbs if they are managed in accordance with the e-waste requirements unless they are intentionally crushed or broken.

Facilities collecting mercury-containing lightbulbs must retain documentation that staff have been adequately trained in handling mercury-containing lightbulbs. Operations actively crushing mercury-containing lightbulbs need to follow the full requirements of the HWR, including registration and an operational plan.

7.4. Appliances that Contain Refrigerants

For appliances that contain refrigerants, hazardous waste is generated the moment that the refrigerant is removed from the appliance. Generally, waste appliances containing refrigerants are to be managed as e-waste until a hazardous waste is generated. Once refrigerants have been removed, the appliance is not a hazardous waste if there are no other components still within the appliance that meet the definition of a hazardous waste.

Refrigerants removed from appliances may be exempt from manifest and licence to transport requirements. In order to be exempt, the transport of refrigerants must meet the conditions that are required for MRW to be exempt from manifest and licence to transport requirements. See sections 5.1 and 5.2 for the conditions for manifest and licence to transport exemptions.

8. Waste Oil and Antifreeze

RCFs must not store more than 5,000 L of waste oil unless a higher amount of storage has been approved by a director under the HWR.

If a RCF only stores waste oil and antifreeze in a quantity that does not exceed a total of 5,000 L at any one time in locked or otherwise secure containers and the RCF is owned by a local government, Indigenous nation, a producer or agency operating under an approved extended producer responsibility plan, the following applies:

- the facility need not be secure to prevent unauthorized access by individuals or animals;
- the facility is not required to have signs at each entrance that identifies it as a RCF and does not need to specify the information required under Section 42.3(2)(a) and (b).

9. Facility Closure

When permanently closing a RCF, the owner of the facility must:

- notify ENV at least 90 days in advance of an impending closure of the facility;
- prepare a written closure plan and submit it to ENV 60 days prior to closure;
- if required by ENV, amend the closure plan, prior to closure;
- complete the closure of the RCF in accordance with the closure plan; and,
- notify ENV that the facility is closed within 30 days of closure.



A closure plan should include details such as a schedule of how and when the facility will be closed, decontamination procedures and an estimate of the total time required to close the facility. A closure plan template for hazardous waste facilities is available at the following link:

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/waste-management/waste-discharge-authorization/guides/gui-hwr-05a1_closure_plan_word_template.docx

9.1. Submitting a Closure Plan

Closure plans are to be submitted to ENV at envauthorizationsreporting@gov.bc.ca. The following should be included in your submission:

- the subject line of the email containing the facilities' registration number, the year of the closure plan and the words "Closure Plan" (e.g. **BCG00011 2024 Closure Plan**);
- the registration number in the heading must include at least 5 digits; and,
- attachments in PDF format and if your attachment(s) are too large to be received via email, please provide a download link the body of the email.

Once submitted, you can expect to receive a response confirming your submission has been received. Processing of your submission may take 2-4 weeks. Once your submission has been accepted and placed on file by ENV, you can expect a second email confirm this has been completed. Closure plans for RCFs are not required to be reviewed by ENV.