



# Environmental Fact Sheet

## EPA Revises Test Methods for Evaluating Solid Waste (SW-846)

*This rule amends the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) recognized physical and chemical testing methods for identifying and managing hazardous waste under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). Primarily, this rule authorizes an updated version of EPA's main guidance document for RCRA test methods.*

### Background

Subtitle C of RCRA creates a comprehensive program for the safe management of solid waste. Among the elements of this program are criteria for identifying and listing hazardous waste, along with standards for the storage, treatment, and disposal of those wastes.

In 1980, EPA published the first edition of the guidance document, SW-846, *Test Methods for Evaluating Solid Waste, Physical/Chemical Methods*, to support the testing requirements associated with the RCRA Hazardous Waste program. The changes in testing technology demand that these testing methods be periodically updated. As a result, EPA published the Second Edition in 1982, and issued two updates in 1984 and 1985.

In November, 1986, EPA published the *Third Edition of the Test Methods Manual*, and after reviewing comments and questions on it, issued several technical corrections and announced the Agency's intent to issue additional analytical test methods. On January 23, 1989, the Agency proposed to incorporate the *Third Edition*, along with its first update, into the *Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)*. On February 8, 1990, EPA issued a revised Quality Assurance (QA) Chapter based on comments received in the 1989 proposal, and requested additional comments. As a result of comments, the Agency has made final revisions to the QA Chapter recommending the use of the procedures in this Chapter.

This rule replaces the 1982 Second Edition, including its two updates, by incorporating by reference the *Third Edition* (and its first update) into the RCRA regulations. Concurrently, EPA is issuing a proposed second update to the *Third Edition*.

## **Action**

The *Third Edition* of SW-846 is the appropriate testing methodology reference for all RCRA testing. This rule officially replaces the Second Edition of *Test Methods for Evaluating Solid Waste, Physical/Chemical Methods* with an updated *Third Edition* that offers new and revised testing methods and procedures. These changes will provide laboratories with more complete and effective tools for testing and characterizing hazardous waste, thereby maximizing the protection of human health and the environment.

In states not authorized to administer the RCRA program, this rule becomes effective immediately. Authorized states must revise their regulations accordingly.

## **For More Information**

To order a copy of publication SW-846, *Test Methods for Evaluating Solid Waste, Physical/Chemical Methods, Third Edition*, call the U.S. Government Printing Office at (202) 783-3238. For further information on the rule, or to order a copy of the *Federal Register* notice, please call the RCRA Hotline Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., EST.

## **RCRA Hotline Phone Numbers**

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