Special Issue

Hazardous Waste Treatment

Message from the Guest Editors

Hazardous waste can exist as solid, liquid, or gas. A hazardous waste characteristic is a property which, when present in a waste, indicates that the waste poses a sufficient enough threat to merit regulation as hazardous. The U.S. EPA established four hazardous waste characteristics: ignitability, corrosivity, reactivity, and toxicity. Some examples of hazardous waste are halogenated and non-halogenated organic solvents, PCBs, and pesticides.

Hazardous waste can be treated by chemical, thermal, biological, and physical methods. Biological treatment of certain organic wastes, such as those from the petroleum industry, is also an option. One method used to treat hazardous waste biologically is called landfarming. Microbes can also be used to stabilize hazardous wastes on previously contaminated sites; in that case, the process is called bioremediation. When plants are used to decontaminate sites, phytoremediation and phytoextraction are applicable technologies. Landfilling is the other primary land disposal method for hazardous waste disposal in the United States.

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