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Attachments: EPS 2020 History of RCRA.pdf

History of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)

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Legislative History

The [Resource Conservation and Recovery Act \(RCRA\)](#) is our nation's primary law governing the disposal of solid and hazardous waste. RCRA was signed into law on October 21, 1976 to address the increasing problems the nation faced from our growing volume of municipal and industrial waste. RCRA was an amendment to the Solid Waste Disposal Act of 1965, which was the first statute that specifically focused on improving solid waste disposal methods.

Since 1976, RCRA has been amended and strengthened by Congress including in November 1984 with the passage of the federal Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments (HSWA). Among other mandates, these amendments to RCRA required phasing out [land disposal of hazardous waste](#), [corrective action for releases](#) and waste minimization. Waste minimization refers to the use of source reduction and/or environmentally sound recycling methods prior to treating or disposing of hazardous wastes.

RCRA has been amended on two occasions since HSWA:

1. Federal Facility Compliance Act of 1992 – strengthened enforcement of RCRA at federal facilities.
2. Land Disposal Program Flexibility Act of 1996 – provided regulatory flexibility for land disposal of certain wastes.

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Statutes

Links to the federal solid waste statutes are below:

- [Solid Waste Disposal Act of 1965 \(PDF\)](#) (10 pp, 1.86 MB)
- [Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 \(PDF\)](#) (47 pp, 7.72 MB)
- [Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1984 \(PDF\)](#) (73 pp, 12.4 MB)
- [Federal Facility Compliance Act of 1992 \(PDF\)](#) (14 pp, 2.31 MB)
- [Land Disposal Program Flexibility Act of 1996 \(PDF\)](#) (5 pp, 120 K)

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Related Information

- The RCRA cleanup program oversees thousands of cleanups across the country, including many with risks comparable to sites managed under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) – [commonly known as Superfund](#).
- [Pollution Prevention](#) is any practice that reduces, eliminates or prevents pollution at its source, also known as "source reduction." [Learn about the Pollution Prevention Act of 1990.](#)
- [Sustainable Materials Management](#) is a systemic approach to using and reusing materials more productively over their entire life cycles.

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[federal solid waste statutes and amendments in one place \(2017 version\) \(PDF\)](#)

(120 pp, 668 K, [About PDF](#))

- To access subsequent versions of the U.S.C., visit the [Government Publishing Office web page](#).

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