



DISPOSAL OF USED DRY CHEMICAL

Tech Tip #22 dealt with dry chemical toxicity. We receive a fair number of calls requesting information on dry chemical disposal, so we are passing on the benefits of our experience.

All Amerex fire extinguishing dry chemicals are mixtures of chemicals, not subject to the Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA). Disposal should be accomplished by contacting the local waste disposal services and/or landfill authorities and presenting them with the appropriate Amerex Material Safety Data sheets (MSDS).

Material Safety Data Sheets were developed primarily to assist in improving personal health and safety (OSHA) and because of this, do not necessarily address disposal to the degree required by every locale (EPA). Unfortunately, in this country there is no such thing as one disposal standard fits all. What is permitted in landfill disposal varies by state, county, municipality, and in some cases, such as Alabama, by the individual landfill operation.

In Alabama, the only state in which Amerex has direct experience, the dry chemicals are considered safe for landfill disposal. However, this must be verified by a certified testing laboratory on an annual basis and involves a permit naming the landfills that can be used. Here, the determination of landfill disposal is made by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management. Because we are a manufacturer, records of disposed quantities must also be maintained. In addition, the landfills require that the dry chemical be sealed in fiber drums, plastic bags or sealed cartons. This is done solely to keep down the dust cloud during transportation, dumping and covering operations.

If a company has multiple locations, there may be one or more national contracts with refuse or garbage companies. Since there is mutual liability, local waste management companies may assist their customers in obtaining the necessary tests and permits as part of their program. We suggest you investigate this possibility.

In relation to hardware, the extinguisher is always broken down and the agent collected for landfill disposal. A hole is either pierced or burned in the cylinder to prevent potential liability and the metal components are then sold to the local scrap metal dealer. Small quantities of hose, etc. are also approved, along with other refuse, for landfill disposal.