



Quick Tips Guide for Small Manufacturing Businesses on Reducing Toxic Releases Related to Storm Events

EPA is part of an ongoing multi-agency effort to help municipalities recover and rebuild stronger from the devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy. In addition to paralyzing entire municipalities and destroying infrastructure, one of the many unfortunate results associated with “super storm” events like Sandy, and from extreme thunderstorms and tornadoes, has been the release of toxic materials via high winds and flood waters into the environment from businesses in the community.

Small manufacturing businesses that comply with environmental regulations and implement sound management practices can stay ahead of the curve with respect to preparing for future extreme weather events. Keeping good records, tightening up the housekeeping procedures, and staff training, are all parts of a program that is a good safeguard against unexpected and costly environmental problems. EPA has created this **Quick Tips Guide** to help businesses lessen flood-related impacts. The recommendations below were extracted from a more comprehensive November 2013 document titled, “*Best Management Practices (BMPs) to Mitigate Toxics and Implement a Greening Program for Small Manufacturing Businesses.*” Additional information can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/region02/p2/>. Questions concerning federal environmental compliance requirements for small business should be directed to Region 2 EPA Division of Enforcement and Compliance Assistance at: 212-637-3565.

- **Keep Records**

- Be clear on what files you must have to be in compliance with the regulations and get them organized and placed in a safe location. Decide next on what information has value to you. Some records are essential to protect you from legal or financial problems, others can provide information on business performance or be useful in demonstrating that your business is taking steps to be green.

- **Training**

- Make sure you have training programs for your business as required by regulations. If you are already doing the OSHA Right-to-Know (Hazard Communication Standard) training, which is about how to keep safe when using chemicals, you may contact the Small Business Assistance Program in your state to identify related training on proper handling and disposal of chemical wastes.

- **Procurement**

- If possible, minimize your toxics material inventory; many vendors will work with clients and provide “just in time and just the right amount,” to nearly match their process needs. Consider substituting your toxic chemicals with safer alternatives (e.g; water-based, not solvent based). A number of cleaning products and other goods that perform well, that are cost-effective and safer for the environment that could be used in your facility are listed on the EPA’s Design for the Environment website at: <http://www.epa.gov/dfe> . Additionally, the small business program in your state may be able to help in identifying non-toxic alternatives to some of the chemicals you may presently be using.

- **Handling**
 - Have proper labels on all containers. □ When transferring chemicals from the original containers, label the new containers right away. □ At the end of work shifts, be sure that chemical containers are tightly closed and returned to their designated storage space.

- **Storage**
 - In areas of flood risk, store toxic materials on higher ground and above the high flood mark. You can find out about the high flood elevation in your area by visiting the FEMA website at: http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/pages/flooding_flood_risks/map_update_schedule.jsp. □ Do not reuse storage containers that previously contained a different toxic material unless you are sure that there will be no chemical reaction. □ If possible, reduce or eliminate outdoor storage of materials to prevent loss and possible releases during a major storm event.

- **Spill Preparedness**
 - Locate all the drains on your property, both indoors and outdoors, and determine where they go. If your building is old, you may be surprised to find that the drain you were sure led to the sanitary sewer and your local wastewater treatment plant actually connects to the storm sewer system that drains directly to a lake or river. □ Consider placing easy-to-use drain covers and spill mitigation supplies close by drains to close them off from a spill if you have time and it is safe to do so.

- **Disposal**
 - Never pour toxics into drains, or flush them down toilets, or dump them outside. □ Think about the schedule in place for waste removal from your business – are toxic materials sitting in your facility for long periods waiting to be disposed? □ Track how your business is generating toxic waste and establish a schedule for waste pick-up accordingly.

- **Beneficial Reuse**
 - Some of your non-toxic products no longer being used may have value to others. Consider using the *Reuse Marketplace* at <http://www.reusemarketplace.org/> which is a free regional network to find, sell, trade, or give away reusable and surplus items that would otherwise be disposed as trash.

Technical Assistance and Additional information

- Region 2 EPA Pollution Prevention and Climate Change Section: 212-637-3755 or 212-637-3764
- Region 2 EPA Division of Enforcement and Compliance Assistance: 212-637-3565
- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Small Business Assistance Program: 609-777-0518
- New York State Small Business Environmental Ombudsman: 877-247-2329
- NYSDEC Division of Environmental Permits, Pollution Prevention Unit: 518-408-0213

For Additional Information about ongoing grant projects related to toxics mitigation

- Rutgers New Jersey Small Business Development Centers: 973-353-1927
- New Jersey Institute of Technology: 973-596-2464
- NYSDEC Environmental Remediation/Office of Environmental Justice: 718-482-4931