

Dangerous Goods and Hazardous Wastes

CityPlan

Riley Park/South Cambie **RPSC**

Dangerous Goods

Dangerous Goods are substances that pose a risk to health, property or the environment.

In commercial, industrial and institutional uses, dangerous goods include explosives, flammables, poisons, biological agents, oxidizers, radioactive materials, and corrosives.

In residential use, dangerous goods include: paints, solvents, pesticides, and, cleaning agents that are corrosive, reactive, toxic or flammable.

There hasn't been a dangerous goods audit to determine the tonnage of dangerous goods transported, handled and stored in the City since the 1998 Regional Report, which estimated there were 400,000 tonnes. It is assumed that this quantity has been reduced because of a number of factors:

- the CP rail barge used to transport trucks containing dangerous goods has been relocated outside the City;
- some shipping containers are now loaded/unloaded at Roberts Bank Super Port, which has diverted some dangerous goods that may have been unloaded in Vancouver in the past; and,
- a large chemical distributor has relocated outside the City.

Gasoline is the largest volume of Dangerous Goods transported and handled in the City.

Regulation

The four levels of government regulate various aspects of the handling, storage, and transportation of Dangerous Goods. The City regulates land use through the Zoning

and Development By-law. The Fire By-law regulates handling and storage.

Grade and Trend

Dangerous Goods received a FAIR-GOOD rating in the 1995 State of the Environment Report Card. Considering there are now fewer gasoline retail outlets in the City which should translate into fewer routes where trucks make deliveries and the majority of the retail outlets left have been upgraded with the latest technology to provide safer and better environmental management of the gasoline, the impact of dangerous goods within the City should be less.

Hazardous Wastes

Also called Special Wastes, hazardous wastes describe dangerous goods, on their own or in mixtures, at the disposal stage. They originate from a wide range of industrial and commercial activities, as well as hospitals and residences. These wastes require special disposal and management to reduce hazard to people and environment. Most commercial, industrial, and institutional waste is disposed of through private contractors. Some is stored on site because there are no adequate disposal options at present.

There have been no new estimates of how much hazardous wastes are generated in the Lower Mainland; in the past almost 60,000 tonnes of hazardous waste were produced each year in the Lower Mainland.

The City of Vancouver over recent years has rezoned some industrial lands to allow for other uses such as commercial/ residential and high tech; this should result in a reduction in the amount of hazardous wastes generated from the industrial sector.

Household Hazardous Waste

Stewardship programs have now been established by the Province which require manufacturers of certain products to have disposal depots available for householders to take back unused quantities of these materials. Stewardship programs are in place for waste paint, herbicides/ pesticides, gasoline, waste oils and pharmaceuticals. Call the Recycling Council of BC Hotline at (604) 732-9253 to find your nearest depot.

Spills

The Vancouver Fire Department's Hazardous Materials Response Team responds to incidents involving dangerous goods. The majority of incidents responded to in the last couple of years involve relatively small volumes of materials.

Grade and Trend

Disposal of Hazardous Wastes received a POOR rating on the 1995 State of the Environment Report Card*. The rating should improve because of the introduction of the product stewardship programs. New disposal facilities and technologies will also help. Many companies are moving towards using less hazardous products in their processes because of costs, liabilities and public pressure.

Depots for household paints, pesticides, and flammable liquids have been set up (such as the East Van Bottle Depot at 2605 Kaslo Street).

More work is needed to:

- 1) reduce the volumes of special wastes generated;
- 2) eliminate illegal dumping of hazardous wastes at local landfills and into sewers or on private/ public land;

- 3) develop a comprehensive Hazardous Waste disposal strategy;
- 4) expand disposal facilities for a broader range of household hazardous waste; and,
- 5) encourage the use of household cleaning alternatives.

Sources

City of Vancouver
State of the Environment Report

*The 1995 State of the Environment Report is an accounting of where the City of Vancouver is in the stewardship of our natural environment. The report identifies a number of key indicators to chart the City's progress in protecting the environment.