

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Solid Waste Program
Division of Waste Management

SUBJECT: Management of Appliances Made Chiefly of Plastic

DATE: August 2003

In 1991, the North Dakota State Legislature placed a ban on the landfill disposal of lead acid batteries, used motor oil, and major appliances. At the time, these banned items had relatively high resource value and low-cost recycling options available. The law defines a "major appliance" as "an air conditioner, clothes dryer, clothes washer, dishwasher, freezer, microwave oven, oven, refrigerator, stove, furnace, water heater, humidifier, dehumidifier, garbage disposal, trash compactor, or other similar appliance." The purpose of the ban on major appliances in landfills was twofold: (1) to keep bulky items from quickly filling up landfill space and (2) to ensure recovery and recycling of metal resources.

Since the time the law was passed, some major appliances are now constructed of only small amounts of metal. Examples include humidifiers which contain no metal except for the fan motor, water heaters constructed of fiberglass, and microwave ovens constructed principally of plastic and glass components.

In recognition of this change, we will allow landfill disposal of **household quantities** of humidifiers, water heaters, and microwave ovens that are constructed predominantly of plastic, fiberglass, or glass. We encourage the separation of metal components from these materials. Plastic, fiberglass and glass may be recycled or disposed as an industrial waste. The Division should be contacted for guidance on disposal of greater than household quantities. Major appliances that are constructed primarily of metal must not be landfilled and should be stockpiled for recycling. Microwave ovens, including those constructed principally of nonmetal components, may have capacitors that contain polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Accordingly, disposal of microwave ovens containing PCBs in municipal waste landfills must conform with the Division's guidelines for management of PCB waste. Disposal of microwave ovens in inert waste landfills is prohibited.

This memo does not change the existing ban on the landfill disposal of lead acid batteries or used motor oil. We believe this information is consistent with the intent of state law, and reserve the right to add or delete to the list of major appliances that may be disposed in landfills. Questions may be directed to the Division at 701-328-5166.