

*Nonnuclear Industrial Hazardous Waste:  
Classifying for Hazard Management*

November 1981

NTIS order #PB82-134305

**NONNUCLEAR  
INDUSTRIAL  
HAZARDOUS  
WASTE**

**CLASSIFYING FOR  
HAZARD MANAGEMENT**

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**A TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM**

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# Preface

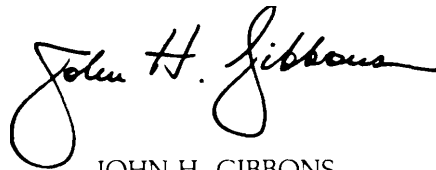
The Office of Technology Assessment is currently conducting an assessment on nonnuclear industrial hazardous waste at the request of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. Its Chairman, Rep. John D. Dingell, asked OTA for a preliminary report on hazard classification because this critical issue, one of several being studied in the OTA project, will likely be addressed this fall.

This technical memorandum addresses the following topics:

- basic issues surrounding a degree-of-hazard classification approach; the potential for incorporating a degree-of-hazard concept through classification in current regulations of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA);
- various methods for applying a degree-of-hazard classification system; and some questions to be addressed in making the decision whether or not to select and incorporate a degree-of-hazard classification system at the Federal and State level.

OTA's analysis to date finds that a well-designed degree-of-hazard classification system might provide a strategy for cost-effective management of nonnuclear industrial hazardous waste. However, it would be important to choose several degrees of hazard-ousness and not to exclude types of waste, such as those generated in relatively small quantities and some chemicals with known chronic (long-term) toxicity, without making assessments of the levels of hazard they pose to the public.

While a regulatory system based on degree-of-hazard classification may appear reasonable and cost effective, it should not be regarded as a panacea for the critical national problem posed by industrial waste. Moreover, it is not necessarily a radical departure from existing regulations. No change in RCRA would be needed, and a quantitative hazard classification scheme could be incorporated incrementally into various segments of the current program. Hazard classification, based on scientific data for waste, management technologies and sites, should be viewed as an evolutionary rather than revolutionary development for industrial waste management and regulation.



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● \*Resigned as of Sept. 24, 1981

NOTE: The advisory panel provided advice and critique, but does not necessarily approve, disapprove, or endorse this technical memorandum for which OTA assumes full responsibility.

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