

First interim report of the Monitoring Committee to deal with the urgent issues - Enforcement of provisions of the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016, in Solvent recovery units

CPCB has constituted Monitoring Committee in compliance with orders dated 30/7/2018 of the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, Principal Bench, New Delhi, in the matter of Original Application Number 804/2017 (earlier O.A. NO.36/2012): Rajiv Narayan & Anr. Vs Union of India & Ors. In another matter of M.A. No. 1302/2018 (in Interlocutory Application No. 63 in W.P. (C) No. 657/1995), the Hon'ble Tribunal has passed orders dated 05/12/2018 that the said Committee will also be at liberty to give interim report through CPCB to deal with the urgent issues. The CPCB will be at liberty to take appropriate steps with regard to the remediation of contaminated sites or other urgent issues from time to time.

In compliance with the aforesaid orders of the Hon'ble Tribunal, following is the first interim report of the Monitoring Committee to deal with the urgent issues i.e. Enforcement of provisions of the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016 (HOWM Rules, 2016) in Solvent recovery units

The spent solvent is one of the major hazardous waste generated in industrial processes, and its proper handling and disposal is a challenging aspect of chemical handling in the industries. The HOWM Rules, 2016, requires proper inventory and handling of spent solvent before it is given either for recycle or recovery to the third party solvent recovery units. With the strong base of chemical industries in the country where use of solvents is imperative, the solvent recovery units are located in most of the states in large numbers.

As per the HOWM Rules, 2016, these solvent recovery units are 'actual user' and as such, all relevant provisions of the said rules are applicable to these units. During the surprise visit to two such solvent recovery units namely; Ramkamal Chemicals Pvt Ltd, A-77 and Shiv Shakti Oxalate pvt ltd. A-94/1, Kurkumbh MIDC area along with official of SPCB in Maharashtra, the committee observed that;

1. Both these units could not produce 'actual user authorisation' which is mandatory from SPCB, though they have renewed their consent to operate with specific condition of obtaining actual user authorisation. These units could not show the passbook as prescribed under the rules.
2. The industry plant managers were not aware of the SOP for Solvent recovery units prepared by CPCB.
3. The storage and handling of spent solvent received from different parties was not scientific, more so at Ms. Ramkamal Chemicals. There was no labeling on drums; some of the drums were not in good conditions, no concrete flooring for storage of drums, no details of drum disposal etc.

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4. There were heavy VOC emissions within the industry premises, more so at Ms Ramkamal Chemicals.
5. Some of the raw material i.e. spent solvents was received from outside the state, and there was no manifest system followed.

All these observations indicate that the enforcement of HOWM Rules, 2016 at such solvent recovery units needs immediate attention. In order to ensure compliance, it is necessary that the CPCB be requested to issue directions to all SPCBs/PCCs for following;

1. To ensure that all the solvent recovery industries in the state have mandatory Authorisation for the same in compliance with the SOP and Checklist issued by CPCB for solvent recovery units, within one month. The said SOP and checklist have been circulated to all SPCBs/PCCs vide letter no. B-29016/(SC)/1(55-IV)/17-18/WM-II/18152-86 dated 08/3/2018 and is also available at CPCB website http://cpcb.nic.in/uploads/hwmd/utilizaion_spent_solvent.pdf
2. To ensure that these solvent recovery industries shall immediately follow the SOP, for safe and scientific spent solvent handling, processing and storage.
3. To ensure that such solvent recovery units shall comply with the provisions of HOWM Rules, 2016, in terms of interstate transport of Hazardous waste and manifest document prescribed under Rule 18 and 19 of the HOWM Rules, 2016, with immediate effect. Stringent action be taken against the erring industries who are giving the spent solvent to such recycling industries without following the manifest systems.
4. SPCBs/PCCs shall conduct industry interaction programs within a month to create awareness and sensitization on HOWM Rules, 2016 with all the stakeholder industries of Spent Solvent generation/utilization.
5. SPCBs/PCCs shall prepare an inventory of such solvent recovery units and publish the same on their website for information of all stakeholders within one month with copy to CPCB within one month.

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