

DISCLAIMER

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Solid Waste (EPA or the Agency) has compiled this methods manual in order to provide comprehensive guidance to analysts, data users, and other interested parties regarding test methods that may be employed for the evaluation of solid waste and other testing specified in regulations issued under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). Except where explicitly specified in a regulation, the use of SW-846 methods is not mandatory in response to Federal testing requirements.

The Agency does not intend to restrict the use of new analytical techniques. Advances in technologies applicable to the sampling and analysis of environmental media and hazardous wastes outpace the ability of the Agency to promulgate revisions to this manual. In addition, given the large number of manufacturers and vendors of scientific equipment, glassware, reagents, and supplies, it is not feasible to cite all possible sources for these materials. Thus, the mention of trade names or commercial products in this manual is for illustrative purposes only, and does not constitute an endorsement or exclusive recommendation for use by EPA. The products and instrument settings cited in SW-846 methods represent those products and settings used during method development or subsequently evaluated by the Agency. Glassware, reagents, supplies, equipment, and settings other than those listed in this manual may be employed provided that method performance appropriate for the intended RCRA application has been documented as described in Chapter Two (see Sec. 2.1).

EPA generally does not intend these methods to be overly prescriptive. The words "shall," "must," or "require" are used to indicate aspects of the method that are considered essential to its performance, based on sound analytical practices (e.g., an instrument must be calibrated before use). In contrast, the words "should," "may," or "recommend" are used to provide guidance on aspects of the method that are useful but not essential. This flexibility does not apply to those method-defined parameters where the analytical result is wholly dependant on the process used to make the measurement.

EPA emphasizes that the ultimate responsibility for producing reliable analytical results lies with the entity subject to the Federal, State, or local regulation. Thus, members of the regulated community are advised to refer to the information in Chapter Two and to consult with knowledgeable laboratory personnel when choosing the most appropriate suite of analytical methods. The regulated community is further advised that the methods here or from other sources need only be used for those specific analytes of concern that are subject to regulation or other monitoring requirements.

Many of the methods include performance data that are intended as guidance on the performance that may be achieved in typical matrices and may be used by the analyst to select the appropriate method for the intended application. These performance data are not intended to be used as absolute QC acceptance criteria. Rather, each laboratory should develop performance criteria as described in Chapter Two and elsewhere in the manual.

In summary, the methods included here provide guidance to the analyst and the regulated community in making judgements necessary to generate data that meet the data quality objectives for the intended use of the results.