



NSPE Position Statement No. 1723—Hazardous Waste Management

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NSPE CONTACT: Legislative and Government Affairs Committee

At present, procedures have been established through professional and occupational licensing laws and voluntary certification programs for ensuring minimum competency of individuals engaged in hazardous waste assessment, design, remediation, and management activities.

NSPE recognizes the responsibility of professional engineers to protect the public health and safety from the risks of hazardous wastes. All PEs are required by law and by their ethical standards to understand and adhere to the many national, state, and local laws and regulations that are now in force. These laws include the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA); the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA); the Clean Water Act; Safe Drinking Water Act; Clean Air Act; Toxic Substances Control Act; Department of Energy and Nuclear Regulatory Commission rules; and numerous environmental restoration, federal land management, and mining laws.

Because engineers are often charged with implementing laws governing hazardous wastes, and because their technical expertise is essential to the development of technically sound policies, the engineering profession must continue to participate in the development and implementation of laws and regulations that affect hazardous waste management.

NSPE will oppose the creation of national and state licensing laws, regulatory rules and private certification programs that permit unqualified individuals to practice hazardous waste management engineering, as governed by national or state law, without first obtaining a professional engineering license.

NSPE also opposes national and state laws that require licensed professional engineers to obtain additional licenses or certificates in order to continue providing services that they are already authorized to provide under the PE statutes.

NSPE urges legislative and regulating bodies to work to integrate the implementation of laws and rules with overlapping applications and jurisdictions.

NSPE will continue to monitor the process of legislating and implementing hazardous waste management regulations, and will offer ideas for improvement and constructive criticism.