

At the local level

In addition to the federal requirements, local authorities may impose further restrictions in order to ensure stable operation of their POTWs, avoid undesirable environmental impacts or prevent contamination of sewage sludges.

In future, the pretreatment program will impose much more severe restrictions on toxic discharges by industry in order to achieve very high quality sludges and comply with water quality criteria. The program may also include global toxicity standards for effluent (bio-tests or bio-assays).

1.2.4. NEW SLUDGE⁵ REGULATION (National Sewage Sludge Rule)

This new rule was authorized by the EPA's administrator in November 1992 and it will soon be published in the Federal Register. It is the result of fifteen years of studies and research and it aims at re-use of sludges together with their controlled disposal through:

- . application on farmland, forests, gardens etc;
- . disposal at identified surface sites or landfill sites reserved solely for this purpose;
- . incineration at facilities set aside solely for sludges.

The Rule sets requirements for heavy-metal and pathogenic micro-organism concentrations, and in the case of incineration, it sets limits on total hydrocarbon concentrations in emissions. It also prescribes sludge management practices to limit exposure of humans and ecosystems.

⁵ SLUDGE: semi-solid residues that result from many air and water treatment processes. Sludges are often seen as hazardous wastes.