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Tire-Derived Fuel (TDF)

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) supports the highest and best practical use of scrap tires in accordance with the waste management hierarchy, in order of preference: reduce, reuse, recycle, waste-to-energy, and disposal in an appropriate facility. Disposal of scrap tires in tire piles is not an acceptable management practice because of the risks posed by tire fires, and because tire piles can provide habitats for disease vectors, such as mosquitoes.

In 2003, more than 290 million scrap tires were generated in the U.S. Nearly 100 million of these tires were recycled into new products and 130 million were reused as tire-derived fuel (TDF) in various industrial facilities. TDF is one of several viable alternatives to prevent newly generated scrap tires from inappropriate disposal in tire piles, and for reducing or eliminating existing tire stockpiles.

Based on over 15 years of experience with more than 80 individual facilities, EPA recognizes that the use of tire-derived fuels is a viable alternative to the use of fossil fuels. EPA testing shows that TDF has a higher BTU value than coal. The Agency supports the responsible use of tires in portland cement kilns and other industrial facilities, so long as the candidate facilities: (1) have a tire storage and handling plan; (2) have secured a permit for all applicable state and federal environmental programs; and (3) are in compliance with all the requirements of that permit.

More information on the use of TDF in kilns and boilers is available on EPA's scrap tire web site at: <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/non-hw/muncpl/tires.htm>. The web site also contains links to other EPA, state, and industry information on the use of TDF.