

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.12 Hazardous Materials and Toxic Wastes

The manufacture, transport, and disposal of hazardous and toxic wastes have become a progressively important issue, especially in desert areas where potential impacts are erroneously considered to be less than in other areas. Regulation of toxic and hazardous materials lies with a variety of federal, state, and local agencies, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the California Office of Health Planning and Development, and county health departments. Applicable federal regulations include the Resources Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), the Federal Clean Air Act, and the Toxic Substances Control Act.

Counties are authorized by state law to prepare Hazardous Waste Management Plans (HWMP) in response to the need for safe management of hazardous materials and waste products. In the CDCA planning area, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRWQCB) and area water districts maintains information concerning contaminated water wells and groundwater. The state and federal Environmental Protection Agencies (EPA) and the State Department of Health also provide information concerning specific hazardous waste sites.

There are no large industrial or commercial users of hazardous materials in the planning area or area of influence, although there are identified hazardous/toxic material small quantity generators are associated with commercial, industrial and medical operations. These have the potential to be associated with accidental spills, purposeful illegal dumping, air emissions, and other uncontrolled discharges into the environment. Improper use and management of these materials pose a significant potential threat to the environment.

Products, chemical and purified chemical compounds, and elements that are considered hazardous or toxic exist in wide variety and are used in households, commercial businesses and industrial operations and processes. They range through home and pool related chlorine products, chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, stored fuels and waste oil, chemical solvents and lubricants, and a variety of medical materials, including biological and radioactive wastes.

Hazardous Waste Management Plans. Jurisdictions responsible for land management coordinate with appropriate county, state and federal agencies in the identification of hazardous material sites, and their timely cleanup. In order to manage these issues, the jurisdiction may establish and maintain information on these sites, and periodically monitor facilities and operations that produce, utilize or store hazardous materials. By staying involved in multi-agency monitoring of illegal dumping in the BLM, conferring in the regulation of underground storage tanks and septic systems, and regulating the

transport of hazardous materials through the CDCA planning area, the BLM can better protect against potential hazards associated with hazardous materials and wastes.

The BLM coordinates and cooperates with Riverside County in addressing illegal use and/or dumping of hazardous and toxic materials on public lands. The Riverside County HWMP was adopted by the Board of Supervisors and approved by the California Department of Health Services in 1990. The County HWMP identifies the types and amounts of wastes generated in the County and established programs for managing these wastes. The Riverside County HWMP also assures that adequate treatment and disposal capacity is available to manage hazardous wastes generated within its jurisdiction, and addresses issues related to manufacture and use.

The state and federal Environmental Protection Agencies (EPA) and the State Department of Health also supply information concerning specific hazardous waste sites and their locations. The California Department of Industrial Relations, Cal-OSHA Division, regulates the proper use of hazardous materials in industrial settings. Private database screening and documentation services are also available, which will search, extract, and summarize reports on contaminated site recorded in various state and federal databases.

Household Hazardous Waste. Residential use of household chemicals, automobile batteries, used oil, paint and similar materials result in hazardous waste. “ABOP” (Antifreeze, Batteries, Oil and Latex Paint) disposal sites are available for planning area residents to dispose of these materials. These facilities will take up to 5 gallons or 50 pounds of materials per trip, and all materials must be clearly marked and sealed. Local residents may also properly dispose of used motor oil through a variety of local programs, including curbside pick up. Riverside County also organizes Household Hazardous Waste collection days throughout the year at fire stations and city corporation yards across the valley.

Hazardous Materials Response. Hazardous and toxic materials are determined critical by county health departments, which can require owners of storage facilities to test, temporarily close and/or remove all hazardous liquids, solids or sludge located on the site. Leaking underground storage tanks must be removed by contractors having Hazardous Waste Certification and a General Engineering license. Between cessation of storage and actual closure, monitoring is generally required by the site’s operating permit. When soils contamination is detected, the clean up procedure to be followed, the degree or level of cleanliness required by the regulator, and the method of treatment (if permitted) will be directed by the county hazardous materials division and/or the Regional Water Quality Control Board.