



Practical use of the Guidelines on best available techniques and provisional guidance on best environmental practices

Case study:

Smouldering of copper cables

In country X, an increasing number of cases showing manual practices to smoulder cables or computer scrap has been identified in small metal recycling facilities. Copper is thus recovered by open burning of plastic coatings from electrical cables and wiring which are then sold to recycling companies to be smelted and refined to develop new copper alloys.

Those practices have been reported to the National Health Protection Agency which has sent an official request for assistance to the National Environmental Protection Agency to tackle this sanitary issue. Indeed, manual copper recovery practices raise significant concerns because recyclers, who do not have protective equipments, are directly exposed to the fumes engendered by plastics burning.

The Environment Protection Agency has been mandated by the Health Protection Agency to consider relevant and available documentation and guidance, in particular the guidelines on BAT&BEP under the Stockholm Convention, to prepare a short note describing a range of possible actions to address the situation.

Questions:

As an environmental advisor to the Environmental Protection Agency, what measures would you recommend the National Health Protection Agency implements in order to comply with the Stockholm Convention and protect the health of recyclers?

The list of activities could include:

- BAT&BEP activities and any related actions contributing to their implementation;
- possible timeframe of implementation;
- main stakeholders to be involved.