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ISSN: 2252-5211
International Journal of Waste Resources

Commentary

Solid Waste Management by Plasma Gasification and their Safety Aspects

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DESCRIPTION

Plasma gasification is a process that uses very high temperature plasma to convert organic matter into syngas, which is a mixture of hydrogen and carbon monoxide. Syngas can be used as a fuel or a feedstock for other products. The inorganic matter in the waste is melted into a glassy slag, which can be used as a construction material or disposed of safely. Plasma gasification can treat various types of waste, such as municipal solid waste, industrial waste, biomass, coal, oil sands, and hazardous waste. It can also use air as the gasifying agent, eliminating the need for an oxygen plant. It has high conversion efficiency and low emissions compared to other waste-to-energy technologies.

This type of gasification requires a plasma torch, which is a device that generates plasma by passing an electric arc through a gas such as argon or nitrogen. The plasma torch can reach temperatures of up to 14,000°C (25,200°F), which is nearly as hot as the sun's surface. The plasma torch can be fed with different gases depending on the desired application. Plasma gasification is still an emerging technology that faces some challenges, such as high capital and operating costs, technical complexity, feedstock variability, and regulatory uncertainty. There are only a few commercial-scale plasma gasification plants operating in the world, mostly in Japan and Europe. More research and development is needed to improve the performance and economics of plasma gasification.

It has both positive and negative environmental impacts. On the positive side, plasma gasification can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, produce clean and renewable energy, recover valuable metals, and produce inert slag that can be used as a building material. On the negative side, plasma gasification can produce harmful emissions such as nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides, particulate matter, and heavy metals. It also consumes a lot of energy and oxygen, and generates waste water and residues that need to be treated or disposed.

Some of the safety aspects of plasma gasification are:

- It can destroy harmful pathogens, viruses, and bacteria in medical and other hazardous wastes, reducing the risk of infection and contamination.
- It can produce syngas that is cleaner and less toxic than the flue gas from conventional incineration, reducing the emissions of pollutants such as dioxins, furans, nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides, and particulate matter.
- It can recover metals and produce inert slag that can be used as a building material, reducing the amount of waste that needs to be landfilled or disposed of. The slag is also chemically stable and does not leach harmful substances into the environment.
- It can operate at high temperatures and pressures that prevent the formation of explosive mixtures or flammable gases. The plasma torches are also electrically isolated from the gasification chamber, reducing the risk of arc flash or electrocution.

The environmental performance of plasma gasification depends on various factors, such as the type and composition of the waste, the operating conditions of the process, the gas cleaning system, the energy recovery system, and the valorization of the products. Plasma gasification is generally considered to have a better environmental performance than conventional incineration, but it also has higher costs and lower efficiency.

CONCLUSION

The avoiding of methane emissions from landfills involved in converting the waste into syngas and slag. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming. It produces hydrogen gas from natural gas or coal without releasing carbon dioxide. Hydrogen is a clean and renewable energy carrier that can be used for various applications. Carbon dioxide is a major greenhouse gas that causes climate change. Generating electricity from syngas with lower emissions than conventional fossil fuel power plants. Syngas is a mixture of hydrogen and carbon monoxide that can be burned to produce power. Recovering metals and producing inert slag that can be used as a building material. Metals and slag are valuable resources that can reduce the need for mining and manufacturing, which are sources of greenhouse gas emissions.

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Received: 02-Jan-2023, Manuscript No. IJWR-23-20638; **Editor assigned:** 04-Jan-2023, PreQC No. IJWR-23-20638 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 18-Jan-2023, QC No. IJWR-23-20638; **Revised:** 25-Jan-2023, Manuscript No. IJWR-23-20638 (R); **Published:** 01-Feb-2023, DOI: 10.35248/2252-5211.23.13.512.

Citation: Almazrouei L (2023) Solid Waste Management by Plasma Gasification and their Safety Aspects. Int J Waste Resour. 13:512.