

Management of Water-Fuel Mixtures in Washington State

This guidance is for generators, transporters, and fuel storage terminal operators that generate water-fuel mixtures. It is not applicable to used oil or water-used oil mixtures.¹ The decision whether to manage a waste material consisting of water and fuel as a dangerous waste is the responsibility of the generator. Examples of materials that are or are not considered dangerous wastes are shown below.

For the purpose of this guidance, the water-fuel mixtures listed in Table 1 designate as dangerous waste only for ignitability (D001) and/or TCLP² for benzene (D018). In addition, the term “fuel” is limited to common ordinary fuels such as gasoline, jet A fuel, kerosene, and diesel. These fuels when used as products may have additives, which enhance performance. The additives are not a factor in this guidance. Note: the tables below may not capture every situation or waste type; case-by-case determinations may still be relevant.

Household Water-Fuel Mixtures

When individuals generate water-fuel mixtures (wastes) at home, on their property, through routine maintenance of their residence, the waste is referred to as “household hazardous waste.” Household hazardous waste is regulated under local jurisdictions and not under Washington’s Dangerous Waste Regulations or federal Hazardous Waste Regulations (please see [WAC³ 173-303-071\(3\)\(c\)](#)).

Water-Fuel Mixtures that are not Dangerous Waste When Recycled

The following water-fuel mixtures are not considered dangerous waste when they are legitimately recycled; where the recovered fuel is used for its fuel purposes and recovered water is discharged under an NPDES⁴ or pretreatment permit. Generators must document their materials are being legitimately recycled by writing (1) how the material qualifies for one of the categories listed in Table 1, (2) how the material is to be recycled and (3) that the recycling facility receiving the material has the necessary equipment to do so. In addition, the generator must maintain a written record of the water-fuel mixture shipped off-site. These records must include date and quantity of material shipped, along with the name, address, and phone number of the reclamation facility. Records must be retained for three years.

¹ For additional information, refer to Ecology publication, [Used Oil: Materials that may or may not be managed as used oil in Washington State](#), #06-04-00X, revised May 2006.

² Toxic Characteristic Leaching Procedure

³ Washington Administrative Code

⁴ National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

Table 1. Examples of water-fuel mixtures that are not dangerous waste when recycled:

Water-Fuel Mixtures	Qualifier and Comments
In surface water, groundwater, and rainwater	Only for surface water, groundwater, and rain contaminated with a fuel. Examples: recovered spill material on the ground mixed with rainwater or spills on a drip pan with rainwater.
As condensate	Condensate formed in transportation pipelines and product fuel storage tanks.
As phase separation water	Water that phase separates out from the storage of fuel products that may contain fuel fractions, such as draw water.
As rinsewater (in this case, water is considered used for its solvent properties)	When the rinsewater or subsequent mixture contains only water and fuel (no cleaning agents, solvents, sludge etc.). Examples: tank rinsewater or rack water.
As sump/secondary containment liquids	When the liquids are only water and fuel.
As water-fuel separator effluent	When the effluent is only water and fuel.

Table 2. Examples of water-fuel mixtures that are dangerous waste when recycled:

Water-Fuel Mixtures	Qualifier and Comments
With fuels as solvents	When the fuel in the mixture was used for its solvent properties; for example, gasoline used as a degreaser.
As rinsewater (in this case, water is used for its solvent properties)	When the rinsewater or subsequent mixture contains cleaning agents, solvents, and/or other materials rather than only water and fuel. Examples: tank rinsewater mixed with tank sludge/bottoms or rack water with other contaminants.
As wastewaters	Including wastewaters and other industrial, manufacturing, agricultural, or other business-related wastewaters or process waters and, bilge wastewater. NOTE: Bilge water often contains used oil (along with fuels). If bilge water contains recoverable amounts of used oil, manage the mixture under the used oil regulations (see footnote 1 for publication reference).
In soils and sediments	Manage soils and sediments containing these mixtures as though they contain a dangerous waste. Examples: spills into the soil. Also refer to petroleum contaminated media at WAC 173-303-071(3)(t) for possible regulatory relief.

Water-Fuel Mixtures	Qualifier and Comments
In surface water, groundwater, and rainwater	Manage surface water, groundwater, and rainwater contaminated with fuel and other contaminants as though they contain a dangerous waste. Also refer to petroleum contaminated media at WAC 173-303-071(3)(t) for possible regulatory relief.
As sump/secondary containment liquids	The liquids contain contaminants other than only water and fuel, such as sumps collecting water from parking lots or sumps collecting non-point source runoff or antifreeze.
As water-fuel separator effluent	The effluent contains contaminants other than only water and fuel.
Solids and tank bottoms	Generated during tank cleanouts and maintenance activities. Example: concentrated tank bottoms.
As listed water/fuel mixtures	Any water/fuel mixtures that designate as listed waste.
As characteristic and/or criteria water/fuel mixtures	Mixtures designating for any characteristic (other than for D001 and D018) or that exhibit a state criteria.
As solid waste and/or dangerous wastes	Any water/fuel mixture that contains or is mixed with a solid waste or dangerous waste, such as bilge water with fuel.

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