



# Materials that may or may not be managed as used oil in Washington State

This guidance is for used oil generators, collectors, transfer operators, processors, burners and regulatory agency staff. Contact the nearest regional office of the Department of Ecology for assistance (see page 3). The decision to manage a waste material containing used oil as 'on-specification', 'off-specification', or as dangerous or solid waste is the responsibility of the generator<sup>(1)\*</sup>. Examples of materials that can and cannot be managed as used oil under federal Used Oil Management Standards as modified by Washington's *Dangerous Waste Regulations* are shown in the tables below<sup>(2)</sup>.

"Used oil means any oil that has been refined from crude oil, or any synthetic oil, that has been used and as a result of such use is contaminated by physical or chemical impurities."  
(WAC 173-303-040 and 40 CFR 279.10)

## Household Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Used Oil<sup>(3)</sup>

People who change their own oil, known as "do-it-yourselfers" should collect and manage it to prevent leaks and spills. Do-it-yourselfers should not mix any other materials into used oil. Do-it-Yourself used oil may often be recycled through retailers of oil products, or city or county supported collection programs at local solid waste transfer stations and landfills. DIY used oil collection centers are subject to used oil management standards and any requirements of local health or solid waste agencies. Additionally, DIY oil can be provided to sites that burn used oil in space heaters, boilers, or industrial furnaces.

## Table 1. Materials That May be Managed as Used Oil

The following materials are considered "used oil" under the Washington *Dangerous Waste Regulations* (WAC 173-303) and may be handled according to the standards for management of used oil (WAC 173-303-515)<sup>(4)</sup>:

Material	Example/Comment
Motor oil	Crankcase oil
Synthetic motor oils & lubricants	
Gear oil	Gearbox oil, transfer case oils
Lube oil	Crankcase oil
Power steering fluid	

\* Superscript numbers in parentheses ( ) denote more detailed information is located in the End Notes section see <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/pubs/0604005a.pdf>

Material	Example/Comment
Transmission fluids	Automatic Transmission Fluid (ATF)
Brake fluid	(separate management is recommended) <sup>(5)</sup>
Oil drained from filters	Crankcase, transmission, power steering filters <sup>(6)</sup>
Compressor oil	
Petroleum-based grease	
Petroleum-based heat transfer oils	Mineral oil and transformer oils with low Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCB) content <sup>(7)</sup>
Refrigerant oils	Except oils with more than 10,000 ppm chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HFCFs), or other halogens, which are extremely hazardous wastes (EHW). <sup>(8)</sup>
Metal working oils without chlorinated compounds	<sup>(9)</sup>
Metal working oils with chlorinated compounds	Only when reclaimed or re-refined. Not when burned as fuel for either energy recovery or incineration
Oil containing up to 2 ppm of PCBs	Some transformer oils <sup>(10)</sup>

## Table 2. Materials Containing or Contaminated With Used Oil, and Used Oil Recovered from Other Materials

The following materials may also be handled according to the standards for used oil management (WAC 173-303-515):

Material	Example/Comment
Oily waters*	Water with recoverable amounts of used oil such as bilge waters, floor washing, containers with used oil and rain water <sup>(11)</sup>
Oil recovered from oil/water separators**	If not contaminated with dangerous waste
Oil filters that have not been drained	
Residues from storing or processing used oil	Tank bottoms when mixed with used oil to be burned as fuel <sup>(12)</sup>
Used oil recovered from absorbents and rags	If not contaminated with dangerous waste <sup>(13)</sup>
Fuels mixed with used oil	Small amounts of fuel, like kerosene, diesel, gasoline, or jet fuel from fuel filters <sup>(14)</sup>
Soils contaminated with used oil	If the soil has recoverable amounts (i.e., free flowing oil) of oil <sup>(15)</sup>

\*Ecology is proposing a 2-5% minimum threshold for oil in water as a definition of oily water that is subject to used oil regulation. Below 2-5% oil in water would be considered wastewater subject to designation as a solid waste. Individuals or companies desiring to comment on this proposal should contact Tom Cusack 360-407-6755.

\*\*This should be determined on a case-by-case basis. Whether the material can be managed as used oil depends on the type of business at which the separator is located and what materials the separator receives.

### Table 3. Materials That Are NOT Used Oil

These materials do not qualify to be managed under state and federal used oil management standards.

Material	Example/Comment
Antifreeze	Must be recycled separately from used oil <sup>(16)</sup>
Solvents/Thinners	Low or high flash parts washing solvent, paint thinners, diesel, kerosene, paint gun wash, brake cleaners <sup>(17)</sup>
Fuels/Refinery Intermediates	Gasoline, jet fuel, kerosene, heating oil, diesel, refinery byproducts, intermediates or cutter stocks; must be managed separately
Rags or absorbents	Solid waste subject to designation once free flowing used oil has been removed
Soils/Spill Residue	Solid waste subject to designation once free flowing used oil has been removed
Chlorinated Metal working oils	When burned for energy recovery
CFC or HCFC refrigerant oil	If more than 10,000 ppm CFC or HCFC, must be recycled or reclaimed separately from used oil or managed as dangerous waste (EHW)
Oily water that has a sheen or minor amount of oil	Water contaminated by small leaks, drips, or drops of used oil (de minimis or lesser amounts of oil)
Any waste material that would be identified as a dangerous waste	Listed, characteristic, or criteria dangerous wastes such as organic & inorganic solvents, caustic or acid dip tank solutions
Oil with high levels of PCBs	Oil with more than 2 and less than 49 ppm PCBs may only be burned as fuel in certain high efficiency boilers or furnaces; <sup>(18)</sup>  Oil with 50 ppm PCB or more is regulated under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)
Material skimmed from parts washers; solvent tank, cabinet style or other	Solid waste is subject to dangerous waste determination <sup>(19)</sup>
Oil/water separator sludge	Solid waste is subject to dangerous waste determination
Vegetable oils and animal fats	Must be managed separately as solid waste
Bilge Water	Bilge water with de minimis or less amounts of oil generated from contact with crude oil or refinery products

## Disposal

Ecology encourages used oil recycling. It should not be disposed of on the ground, in the garbage, or down a drain. The Solid Waste Regulations and most local agencies prohibit disposal of containers of free liquids to landfills. Used oil liquids, if disposed, are solid waste subject to a dangerous waste determination. Note that abandoning containers of used oil is considered disposal.

## Prohibitions

In Washington, there is a prohibition against mixing any dangerous wastes, such as spent solvents, gasoline, antifreeze, brake cleaner carburetor cleaner, chlorinated paraffin based cutting oil, and small quantity generator conditionally exempt waste into used oil. This applies to all businesses, agencies, or non-governmental organizations.

Washington law (RCW 70.95I.060) prohibits used oil from being used for dust suppression or weed abatement including on roads, driveways, and parking lots. Federal regulations (40 CFR 279.12) also prohibit the use of used oil for dust suppression.

## Questions

For other used oil questions, please contact your nearest Ecology office:

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OLYMPIA WA 98504-7600

E-Mail: [usedoil@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:usedoil@ecy.wa.gov)

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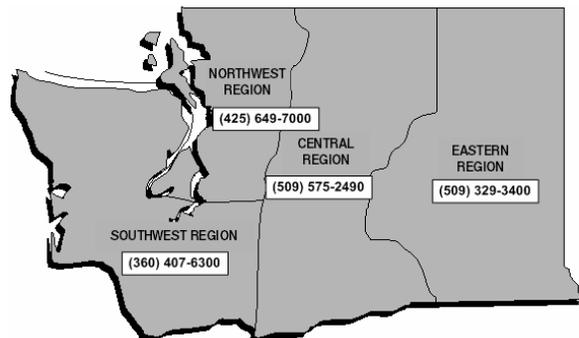
## Department of Ecology Offices

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**Eastern Regional Office**  
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*If you need this information in an alternate format, please call the Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program at 360-407-6700. Persons with hearing loss can call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability can call 877-833-6341*