



# Shoptalk

A newsletter about dangerous waste and pollution prevention  
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### Department of Ecology

Your business is liable for all dangerous wastes you generate. If you are uncertain about your responsibilities as a dangerous waste generator, call your nearest Ecology office and ask for a hazardous waste specialist. For more information on reducing or recycling dangerous waste, ask for the toxics reduction staff at:

Bellevue: (425) 649-7000  
Lacey: (360) 407-6300  
Yakima: (509) 575-2490  
Spokane: (509) 329-3400

To ask about available formats for the visually impaired 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.

**Shoptalk** is produced by the Washington State Department of Ecology’s Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program.

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# Pain in the Drain

## Septic Tanks are Not for Hazardous Waste

“Out of sight, out of mind.” Some people think this applies to the waste in their septic tank. It pays to be vigilant, however, if your business uses a septic tank. For instance, there was an unpleasant situation (to say the least) in Clark County caused by a mortuary discharging embalming fluid and human waste into their septic system. The wastes caused the system to stop functioning and back up. When a worker complained, Labor and Industries investigated and found what had been happening.



*Hazardous Waste Inspector Dee Williams samples a business's septic tank looking for dangerous waste. Of 17 businesses sampled, 15 had contaminated septic systems.*

Septic tanks, if properly designed, installed, and maintained, can handle a business's domestic wastewater – from normal use of toilets, sinks, and showers. But never allow dangerous waste into your septic system! Don't pour dangerous waste into toilets or utility sinks. Don't send wastewater down floor drains; better yet, plug floor drains.

Putting dangerous waste into your septic system is improper disposal – a violation of the state dangerous waste regulations. It can also kill the “friendly” bacteria in your system that enable it to work effectively. In fact, water quality laws make it illegal to dispose of any industrial wastewater, hazardous or not, into septic systems.

## How can you prevent waste from contaminating your septic system?

First, understand how your septic tank works. A typical septic system has two major components: the septic tank and the drain field. Wastewater first travels to the septic tank. The tank's main purpose is to detain the wastewater for 1 to 2 days. This time allows the solids, greases, oils, and floating objects to separate from the wastewater. Bacteria in the tank work to break down the waste. The liquids then flow to the drain field.



*Cleaning up and sanitizing after the sampling.*

Second, know which products you use that are potentially hazardous. Keep those wastes – and industrial wastes of any kind – out of your septic system. Ecology is finding more and more cases of septic systems contaminated with dangerous waste, such as solvents, diesel, heavy metals, and petroleum products. Ecology staff in one region conducted field sampling to evaluate the problem. They tested septic tanks at 17 businesses – 15 of those contained dangerous waste!

This is a serious problem because the dangerous waste from these septic systems gets into the soil and groundwater. The contamination can spread, and cleaning that up is a big, expensive job. Small businesses often don't have the money to pay for cleanup. The situation is further complicated by the multiple authorities and sets of rules that govern septic systems, including city and county governments, and health departments.

Many types of businesses have septic systems. Ecology is working with local governments to educate businesses on how to prevent the problems caused by dangerous wastes in septic systems. Our priorities are to look at printing and photo-processing shops, automotive, and radiator shops. The bottom line: whether your business is on septic or sewer – never allow dangerous waste to go down the drain.

# A New “Wave”

## Olsen Auto Body Switches to Water-Borne Paint

Dan Schindler, manager and owner of Olsen Auto Body & Collision in Bellingham, took a chance last year and switched to waterborne paint. His was the first shop in Whatcom County to make that change. The transition was intense, but Schindler says his shop saw immediate benefits.

The new paint gives superior color matching and is more durable. It is easier to spray and apply, has better gloss, and reduces polishing time. Plus the switch to a non-toxic product improved conditions for workers and reduced air pollution indoors and outdoors. It also reduced the use of their paint recycler. This led in turn to less hazardous wastes and lower disposal costs. According to Schindler, waterborne paint is more expensive up front but the product goes further and therefore may cost the same or less over the long run.

The transition took many hours of research. Even then, he still had concerns about whether the shop would be able to maintain the same level of production. But Schindler found that the productivity level remained the same.

According to Schindler, making such a change requires some capital improvement. If a shop has relatively up-to-date equipment, the upgrade can cost roughly \$2,000. It can get more expensive if the shop requires a lot of fans and paint booth upgrades.

Schindler said it is too early to determine whether his shop has seen a profit in the nine months since the switch. But based on the many benefits Olsen Auto Body & Collision has seen, they are happy they made the switch from solvent to waterborne paints.

Start-up tips for switching to waterborne paints:

- Research what your shop requires to switch to waterborne paint. A shop can spend thousands of dollars, but in many cases, a comprehensive upgrade is not necessary. For example, if a shop does not paint whole cars, called “completes,” then a large system of fans may not be necessary.
- Perform leak checks on compressed air delivery systems. Improved energy efficiency will help your bottom line.
- Tour shops in your area that have already switched over.

The Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center held a webinar in 2009 on Waterborne Automotive Coatings. See <http://pprc.org/webinars/waterborne.cfm>.

Some paint manufacturers also provide case studies on changing to waterborne paint. See [www.sikkens.net](http://www.sikkens.net) or [https://corporateportal.ppg.com/NA/Refinish/PPGRefinish/2-0-Products/060\\_Waterborne/EN](https://corporateportal.ppg.com/NA/Refinish/PPGRefinish/2-0-Products/060_Waterborne/EN) (These references do not constitute an endorsement by the Department of Ecology.)



*Olsen Auto Body & Collision, in Bellingham, found that water-borne paints color match better and apply easier than toxic solvent-borne paints.*

# 100,000 and Counting

## Auto recyclers help state collect toxic mercury from salvaged cars

When Matt Smith removed the convenience light from under the hood of a Mercury (a fitting coincidence) at Arrow Metals in Woodinville, it represented the 100,000th mercury-containing auto switch collected under the Washington Vehicle Mercury Switch Removal Program.

Since 2006, automobile recyclers in Washington have collected mercury switches from scrap vehicles. This has prevented the equivalent of 225 pounds of the toxic chemical from entering the environment. Washington ranks fifth in the nation for recycling mercury-containing auto switches.

If mercury switches are not removed, mercury can escape into the atmosphere when vehicles are crushed and melted down for re-use.

Washington's program is a partnership between Ecology, the Automotive Recyclers of Washington Association, and End-of-Life Vehicle Solutions, an organization of vehicle manufacturers that no longer use mercury switches.

The statewide program relies on auto recyclers – including dismantlers, wrecking yards, and scrap metal processors – who voluntarily remove and properly dispose of switches before sending vehicles to scrap metal recyclers. Auto recyclers participating in the program are reimbursed \$3 per switch.

“Many of these older vehicles are being scrapped every day,” said K Seiler, manager of Ecology’s Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program. “The switch collection program has been proven to be highly effective in keeping mercury out of the environment, which protects the health of our state now and for generations to come.”

“This is a great example of a very successful public-private partnership between the vehicle recycling industry, Ecology, and vehicle manufacturers,” said Don Phelps of AAA Auto Wrecking and President of the Automotive Recyclers of Washington.

“Ecology has done a magnificent job of putting this program together, coordinating all the players, and administering the program. The vehicle recycling industry is eager to participate in these types of programs that are so beneficial for the environment and are also a great win-win for all of the participants,” Phelps added.

The mercury switches are one of the nation’s largest sources of mercury contamination. Mercury light switches were used until 2003 for convenience lights under hoods and in trunks, as well as in anti-lock braking systems.

Ninety-five percent of all vehicles are recycled making them the most recycled consumer goods in America. Many usable parts are removed from these vehicles and reused saving consumers millions of dollars, reducing insurance rates, and protecting the environment in many ways, including reducing our need to import oil and other raw materials to make new parts. All the aluminum, steel, and other usable materials from remaining vehicle hulks are recycled into new products to save resources. 167,000 end-of-life vehicles were recycled in Washington last year.

Since 2003, the state’s Mercury Chemical Action Plan has guided work preventing the release of approximately 14,300 pounds of mercury into the environment. The plan addresses the elimination, phase-out, collection, and recycling of certain mercury-containing products.



*Matt Smith of Arrow Metals in Woodinville, removes a mercury-containing switch from under the hood of (what else?) a Mercury automobile.*

# Support Your Local Emergency Responders

## March 1 Deadline for 2009

When firefighters and others respond to an emergency, they need to know if there are any hazardous substances on site. That way they can properly protect themselves and the community. This is one reason why businesses that store hazardous chemicals must report every year to the State Emergency Response Commission. These businesses must also report to their Local Emergency Planning Committee and fire department. Besides emergency response, the commission and local agencies use the reports for pre-disaster planning.



*Tier Two reports help firefighters prepare to face hazardous chemicals*

Ecology's Community Right-to-Know Unit reminds businesses who stored hazardous substances during calendar year 2009, that their annual reports are due **March 1, 2010**. Section 312 of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), also known as SARA Title III, requires businesses to submit a Tier Two – Emergency and Hazardous Chemical Inventory report to the State Emergency Response Commission, Local Emergency Planning Committee, and to the local fire department annually.

Hazardous substances are defined as those chemicals present in the workplace that are capable of causing harm. Any product that requires a Material Safety Data Sheet is potentially reportable. You must report if you had 10,000 pounds or more of a chemical or hazardous substance, such as gasoline or diesel. Chemicals classified as Extremely Hazardous Substances (EHS), such as ammonia and chlorine, are reportable at much lower thresholds – ammonia at 500 and chlorine at 100 pounds. The reporting requirements apply to the maximum amount of a chemical on site at any one time during the previous calendar year.

For EPCRA training, contact your Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC).

EPCRAMail, Washington's electronic Tier Two reporting application, is a convenient way to report, especially for businesses with multiple sites. You can download it from EPCRAMail Software - MS Access XP.

You can find all EPCRA reporting requirements, reporting forms, and instructional packets on the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know page. Ecology's Community Right-to-Know Specialists can provide technical and regulatory assistance with the Emergency Planning & Community Right-to-Know Act. E-mail us at [epcra@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:epcra@ecy.wa.gov) or call (800) 633- 7585 and press "2" at the greeting.

Washington State Emergency Response Commission  
Community Right-to-Know Unit  
PO Box 47659  
Olympia WA 98504-7659



# Beyond Waste Version 2.0

## 2009 Plan Update is Done!

The Beyond Waste Plan is the solid and hazardous waste management plan for Washington. Like local plans, the state plan needs updating every five years. After lots of hard work assessing progress, getting input, and making changes, the 2009 Plan Update is complete.

### *Beyond Waste 30 Year Vision*

*We can transition to a society where wastes are viewed as inefficient and where most wastes and toxic substances have been eliminated. This will contribute to environmental, economic and social vitality.*

The update continues with the original vision to eliminate most wastes and toxic substances by 2035. It builds on the five initiatives and two current issues laid out in the original plan. The overall plan structure and all of the background papers written as part of the original plan remain unchanged. Many of the recommendations and milestones also stay the same.

### **Beyond Waste Initiatives**

- Moving toward Beyond Waste with Industries
- Reducing Small Volume Hazardous Materials and Wastes
- Increasing Recycling for Organic Materials
- Making Green Building Practices Mainstream
- Measuring Progress Toward Beyond Waste
- The Plan also addresses current hazardous waste and solid waste issues.

So what has changed? We've strengthened the focus on product stewardship and prevention, as their importance has increased over the last five years. We improved the Implementation Plan, adding a section that more clearly defines local governments' role. We also aligned the plan more closely with agency priorities on mitigating climate change, protecting Washington waters, and reducing toxic threats. That's because Beyond Waste is about more than just waste.

There are some new and improved recommendations and milestones. These changes came from many sources, including the Climate Action Team, state and agency priorities, Ecology staff, the state Solid Waste Advisory Committee, public input, and lessons learned during the first five years. We also made milestones more measurable and better aligned with recommendations. This should keep recommendations and milestones on track to meet the 30-year goals.

Ecology issued the plan update in December 2009. Implementation has already begun in some areas and will continue into the next five years. It's a state plan that provides guidance for all of us – local governments, businesses, Department of Ecology, other state agencies, and non-profit organizations. We cannot get Beyond Waste without all of us working together.

To get a hard copy of the 2009 Update, or for more information, contact Chris Chapman at (360) 407-7160.

# What's New in Annual Reporting?



## Dangerous Waste Annual Reports due March 1

Sites that had an active RCRA Site ID Number in 2009 must file a 2009 Dangerous Waste Annual Report with Ecology by March 1, 2010.

Some things have changed since the 2008 report. There are new requirements concerning One-time-Only waste, and Special Waste. For more information on how changes may affect your report, see Dangerous Waste Annual Report.

To get started on your Annual Report, go to Welcome to TurboWaste.Net. Click on the orange “Enter TurboWaste” button.

- Annual Reporting help is available at Dangerous Waste Annual Report or call 1-800-874-2022 (within Washington) or (360) 407-6170.
- Questions about your 2009 generator status or dangerous waste identification? Call your local Ecology office and ask to talk to a hazardous waste or pollution prevention specialist.
- Questions about how your waste is managed or recycled after you ship it? Call your waste contractor.

## Calling Mr. Yuk

### National Poison Prevention Week

**March 14-20, 2010**



Remember – the Washington Poison Center (WAPC) can answer your questions about poisons and medications on the Poison Help line: 1-800-222-1222.

The line is staffed by specially-trained pharmacists, nurses, and poison specialists – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They also have services for people with hearing problems and for non-English speakers. Calls are free and confidential. (Sorry pet owners, due to reduced funding there is a \$30 credit card fee before answering animal-related poison calls.)

So keep that Mr. Yuk sticker with your list of emergency numbers. Calling it could mean the difference between an emergency room visit or managing the situation safely at home.

# With Property Comes Waste

## The new Problem Wastes for Property Managers

From asbestos to underground storage tanks, commercial properties can house a variety of “problem wastes.” If you manage a commercial property, you may also have to manage the dangerous materials and wastes on the premises, to avoid potential risks to people and the environment. Ecology has a newly revised guide, Problem Wastes for Property Managers, that can help you identify and properly manage common problem wastes.



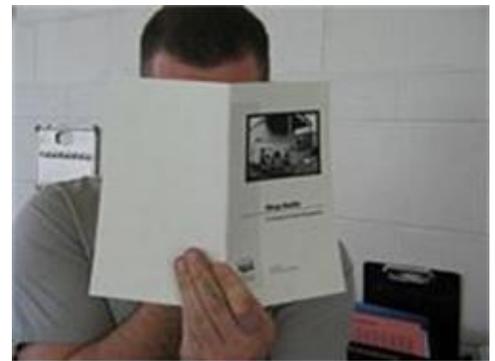
The guide covers what to do about abandoned and unknown wastes, as well as more commonly-found wastes, such as paints and cleaners. Previously, property managers had to sift through a stack of separate, and outdated, fact sheets for this information. The guide compiles this into one convenient, up-to-date booklet.

You can read, download, or print the guide from the link above. You can also get hard copies from Dave Zink at (360) 407-6752.

# Straight Talk on Complex Matters

## The new Shop Guide for Dangerous Waste Management

Are you looking for a “plain English” guide to managing dangerous wastes? Try Ecology’s new publication, Shop Guide for Dangerous Waste Management. This 20-page booklet will help you understand Washington’s dangerous waste generator requirements.



*This 20-page booklet will help you understand Washington’s dangerous waste generator requirements.*

The guide gives specific guidelines for wastes common to most shops, such as shop towels, mercury-containing light bulbs, aerosol cans, used oil, parts washers, and paint waste. It will help you and your staff understand drum and container labeling, accumulation dates and storage limits, requirements for solvent stills, secondary containment, and more.

You can read, download, or print the Shop Guide from the link above. You can also get hard copies from Dave Zink at (360) 407-6752.