



Focus on Spill reporting under the Dangerous Waste Regulations

FROM ECOLOGY'S HAZARDOUS WASTE AND TOXICS REDUCTION PROGRAM

Call 911 immediately if you feel the spill is an emergency situation. This will activate local police, fire or medical responders.

If you have a spill...

Washington's regulations¹ require you to immediately notify Ecology and other appropriate agencies when there is a spill or discharge of a dangerous waste or hazardous substance that poses a threat to human health or the environment. This focus sheet will help you determine if a spill must be reported, who to call and what information to report.

You must take immediate action!

The responsible party must stop or control the spill and clean up released materials² which may include shutting valves or up-righting overturned drums. Take these actions only when it is safe.

Once the spill is under control, the responsible party must:

- Report the spill
- Clean up the site
- Decontaminate the site
- Manage the waste properly
- Dispose of the waste properly

You can hire qualified spill contractors to do the clean up under the supervision of an environmental regulatory agency like Ecology.

Spill reporting is required

You must immediately report any spill or discharge of a hazardous waste or substance which threatens human health or the environment regardless of the amount. Ecology generally considers materials in contact with soil, surface or ground water, or the air as in the environment.

How do I know if I spilled something that needs to be reported?

Materials with ignitable, corrosive, reactive, or toxic properties can threaten human health or the environment. You can get information about the hazards of a particular product or material from a variety of sources such as:

- Flammable, such as spent solvents
- Corrosive, such as sulfuric acid
- Reactive, such as flares
- Toxic, such as lead
- Persistent, such as PCBs
- Container labels and markings
- Material safety data sheets (MSDS)
- Shipping papers or manifests
- The Internet
- The US Dept. of Transportation Emergency Response Guide
<http://emd.wa.gov/3-pet/ent/hazmat-pubs.htm>

If you are unsure if you should report the spill, contact Ecology or another spill responder for guidance.

Dangerous wastes and hazardous substances include materials that are:

¹ The *Dangerous Waste Regulations*, Washington Administrative Code 173-303-145

² WAC 173-303-145(3)

How can I tell if a threat to human health or the environment exists?

Many factors can affect whether a spill is a threat to human health or the environment. These factors include:

- Characteristics of the material
- Amount spilled
- Whether immediate containment occurs
- The environmental media (air, land, or water) involved

As a rule of thumb, you should report a spill when **any** of the following occur:

- Anyone, as a result of exposure, seeks or requires medical attention or examination.
- There is potential for the material to enter water including, surface water, (such as streams, lakes, rivers and ponds) groundwater, storm drains, or ditches.
- Illness, injury, stress or death of fish, wildlife, or domestic animals occurs.
- A release to the air in sufficient quantity or concentration to harm people, animals or plants.
- You cannot quickly control, contain and clean up a spill to soil.

Do small spills need to be reported?

The regulations require reporting when any spill poses a threat to human health or the environment regardless of size.

Do spills inside buildings or containment need to be reported?

A spill inside of a building or concrete or asphaltic containment area must be reported if it escapes the confining area, such as through a doorway, crack, joint, or drain, or if it threatens human health and the environment.

How soon do I have to report it?

The regulations require immediate reporting. Ecology normally considers timely notification to be within one hour of the spill's discovery. However, the person responsible for a spill should take action to control a spill before reporting it.

Who should I contact?

Call any of the numbers listed below at any time to report a spill. The agency you contact will notify all appropriate authorities. However, you must report a spill to water to the Washington Department of Emergency Management and the National Response Center.

- **Local Police, Fire, Rescue - 911**
If the spill is an emergency – call 911 immediately.
- **National Response Center - 1-800-424-8802**

- **Washington Department of Emergency Management - 1-800-258-5990**
They will immediately contact Ecology's Spill Response Team and local emergency management departments, air authorities and state natural resource agencies as necessary.
- **Ecology Regional Offices:** (phone numbers are listed below)
Each office takes calls during normal business hours. Outside of regular business hours the call will transfer to the Washington Department of Emergency management.

Please be aware, other local, federal and state agencies and Ecology programs (Water Quality, Air Quality, Toxics Cleanup) have reporting requirements not discussed in this document.

What information will I need to report a spill?

You will need...

- Responsible party's name, company name, phone numbers, and address
- Location of the spill
- Estimate of quantity released
- Cause of the spill
- People or resources affected
- Any other agencies or contractors notified (local 911, fire, police, air pollution control agency, US Coast Guard or US Environmental Protection Agency, for example).
- Materials involved
- Time the incident started
- Current status at the source (stopped, controlled, on-going)

What can Ecology do for you?

Ecology's main role during spills and cleanup actions is to protect environmental resources and public health. Ecology can provide information such as:

- The hazards of the materials involved
- Steps to control and contain the spill
- Proper clean up procedures
- Identifying affected sensitive resources
- A List of spill response contractors
- Proper waste disposal marks

Ecology may also conduct investigations and pursue appropriate compliance and enforcement actions if there is reason to believe actions do not comply with the *Dangerous Waste Regulations*.

Ecology regional offices

Central Regional Office
1250 West Alder Street
Union Gap WA 98903-0009
(509) 575-2490

Eastern Regional Office
N 4601 Monroe
Spokane WA 99205-1295
(509) 329-3400

Northwest Regional Office
3190 160th Ave SE
Bellevue WA 98008-5452
(425)649-7000

Southwest Regional Office
PO Box 47775
Olympia WA 98504-7555
(360) 407-6300

If you need this information in an alternate format, please call the Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program at (360) 407-6700. If you are a person with a speech or hearing impairment, call 711, or (800) 833-6388 for TTY.