Hazardous Wastes in Automobile Maintenance & Repair Facilities

GECAP of the Georgia Tech Research Institute is a voluntary, non-regulatory environmental compliance program funded by the Georgia Legislature through the University System of Georgia.

Which hazardous wastes should I be concerned about in my repair and maintenance facility?

Wastes that are governed by hazardous waste regulations include:

- Used motor and hydraulic oils,
- Parts cleaning solvents, and
- Paints.

In addition, certain operations, systems, and equipment such as underground storage tanks (USTs) are regulated.

How should I dispose of these wastes?

Used Motor and Hydraulic Oils

These oils should be sent to waste oil recyclers. If the oils are recycled, the amount produced does not count toward the quantity of waste used in the determination of your generator status. A written agreement should be developed with the recycler stating what is done with the used oils. Do not mix your hydraulic and motor oil until you contact your used oil dealer to determine if the dealer needs to collect it separately. Never mix mineral spirits and other spent solvents with the used oil.

Parts-cleaning Solvents

Parts-cleaning solvents are hazardous wastes and the amount generated counts toward the determination of your generator status. These solvents must be shipped to a hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal (TSD) facility using a licensed transporter. An alternative method is to contract with a solvent recycler who will supply fresh solvent and pick up the spent material. In either case, you first need to obtain a generator identification number (GIN) and use the manifest system for shipping the waste material. Do not add any other materials to the solvent drum without checking with the recycler or EPA-permitted TSD facility.

Since solvents will be the main source of your hazardous waste, the amount of solvent produced will probably determine your generator status. For example, if you produce less than 25 gallons each month, you are a conditionally exempt small quantity generator (CESQG); if you produce one 55-gallon drum each month, you are a small-quantity generator (SQG); and if you produce four 55-gallon drums each month, you are a large-quantity generator (LQG). For more information in determining your generator status see Tech Guide, Generator Requirements.

Paints

Allow paint cans to dry and place them in the trash dumpster. Eliminate the need to dispose of leftover paint by never mixing more than needed for a specific job.

Oil Dry

The oil dry used to absorb spills of oil on the floor can be put in the dumpster.

Brake Shoes

Brake shoes should be assumed to contain asbestos unless proven otherwise and should be returned to the supplier or sent to a landfill approved for asbestos disposal. The shoes should be wrapped in

a plastic bag that is approved and properly marked for asbestos.

Used Batteries

Return used batteries to the supplier for recovery of the lead.

Antifreeze

There are two alternatives to handling antifreeze from coolant systems:

- Collect antifreeze from coolant systems and return to a used oil dealer, or
- Collect antifreeze from coolant system, pass through a filter, and reuse.

Air Conditioner Refrigerant

Reclaim and recycle refrigerant using approved extraction and recovery equipment. Residues from equipment may be considered hazardous waste. Individuals must be trained and certified in the use of extraction and recovery equipment as of January 1, 1992.

Information on training and certification programs can be obtained from:

- Mobile Air Conditioning Society (MACS) - 215-352-6080.
- National Institute for Automobile Service Excellence (ASE) - 703-742-3800.

Mineral Spirits

Collect the mineral spirits that are used for cleaning painting equipment and other parts. Check with your solvent recycler to see if this waste can be put in with the waste solvents; otherwise, collect it separately. Putting spent solvents, such as mineral spirits, in with used oil could render the used oil a hazardous waste that must be sent to a TSD facility.

Used Oil Filters

Punch a hole in the filter and thoroughly draining the oil into a used oil container or crush with a press. Then, there are two options for disposal: send the filter to a recycling facility, or, if a Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure (TCLP) test indicates the material is not hazardous, send the filter to a lined landfill. Because the regulations presently are not definitive, you may want to use a hazardous waste disposal firm to be safe.

Wastewater

If the wastewater stream contains waste oil, solvents, and other material from operations such as engine washing, a grit/oil separator should be put in the wastewater discharge. The oil skimmed from the top can be put in with the used oil if there is not too much water in the oil. The grit on the bottom must be checked using a TCLP to determine if it is a hazardous waste. If the material is not hazardous, it can be sent to a sanitary landfill, but first solidify the sludge by mixing it with a sorbent.

Underground Storage Tanks (USTs)

Underground storage tanks used for oil, gasoline, and mineral spirits must be registered with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. See Tech Guide Underground Storage Tanks for more information.

For More Information

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