

THE USED OIL PROBLEM

Used motor oil poses the greatest environmental risk of all automotive fluids. Many environmental problems are caused by improper disposal of used motor oil because it is insoluble, persistent, and contains heavy metals and poisonous chemicals.

Millions of gallons of used motor oil are generated in Washington each year during the routine maintenance of automobiles. This oil can easily be recycled and reused at one of the waste oil recyclers near you. Unfortunately, used oil is being disposed of in ways that have a harmful impact on human health and the environment. Used motor oil is being poured down storm drains or dumped onto the ground. These disposal practices result in pollution of ground water, lakes, rivers, and streams. In the Columbia Basin, ground water and rivers provide our drinking water!

WASHINGTON STATE LAW

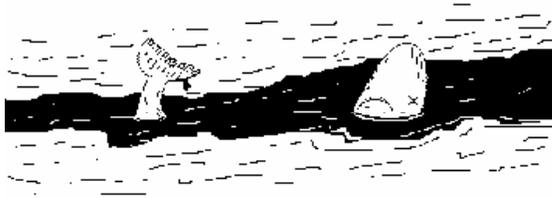
In 1991 the Washington State Legislature passed a law (Chapter 70.951 RCW) targeted at increasing the recycling of used oil rather than disposing of this resource in ways that can harm the environment.

Since 1992, the use of used oil for dust suppression and weed abatement has been prohibited.

Since January 1, 1994, *no person may knowingly dispose of used oil except by delivery to a person collecting used oil for recycling, treatment, or disposal.*

In addition, *no owner or operator of a solid waste landfill may knowingly accept used oil for disposal in the landfill (RCW 70.951.060).*

All used oil must be delivered to a used oil collection center for recycling, treatment or disposal.



HOW BIG IS THE PROBLEM?

- More than 4.5 million gallons of used oil are discarded without being recycled every year in Washington State.
- Do-it-yourselfers often dump their waste oil down a storm drain or pour it on the ground.
 - At least 200 million gallons of used oil are disposed of this way nationwide each year. That's the equivalent of 20 Exxon Valdez spills per year!

- Used oil is the largest single source of oil pollution (over 40 percent) in our nation's waterways.

THE EFFECTS

- One pint of oil will produce a slick covering approximately one acre of water.
- One gallon of used oil can foul the taste of one million gallons of water -- that's a year's supply of water for 50 people!
- Used oil in waterways threatens fish, waterfowl, insects and aquatic life.
- Very small amounts of oil spilled in fish and shellfish habitat will affect their flavor.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Used oil is easily recycled and considered a valuable resource. Re-refining is the best form of oil recycling because it makes used oil as good as new.



Forty-two gallons of high quality crude oil yields only 2.5 quarts of newly refined motor oil. However, just one gallon of used oil yields the same 2.5 quarts of processed oil. Oil never wears out it just gets dirty!



HOW TO RECYCLE

Businesses who perform oil changes will recycle your used oil. This may be the easiest way to ensure your oil is recycled.

If you change your own oil, store the used oil in a clean, sealed container (plastic milk jugs work great) and then return the container to a collection center. Do not mix the oil with other substances such as: antifreeze, engine degreasers, gasoline, paint thinner, etc. These non-oil substances interfere with the reprocessing of used oil.

LOCAL USED OIL COLLECTION SITES

There are over 20 used oil collection sites in Benton and Franklin Counties. To find the site nearest your home, you may call or

pick up a list available at the Benton-Franklin Health Department, Environmental Health Division or contact one of the following:

Franklin County
Franklin County Solid Waste
545-3551

Benton County
Benton County Solid Waste
783-1310 Ext. 5682

Waste Management (curbside recycling for City of Kennewick residents only)
582-5121 or 1-800-572-0618

If you have other used automobile fluids that you wish to recycle and/or dispose of, be sure to contact the above disposal sites to see what they will take. Also, check out the following website for more information on auto fluid recycling.

http://www.ci.richland.wa.us/enviro/auto_fluid_recycling.htm

This brochure was prepared by:

Benton-Franklin Health District
Environmental Health Division
7102 W. Okanogan Place
Kennewick, WA 99336
509.460.4205
website: www.bfhd.wa.gov

BFHD-E-0058 (Rev. 3/08)

USED OIL

home safety series



www.bfhd.wa.gov