



The National Park Service EnviroFact Sheet

Environmental Management Program
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Managing Used Oil (SW-13)

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Used Oil is defined as “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.” Used lubricants, hydraulic fluids, heat transfer fluids, and buoyants are examples of used oil. Used oil is not: oil wastes that have not actually been used; products such as antifreeze and kerosene; vegetable and animal oils; and petroleum distillates used as solvents.

Parks generate used oil and used oil filters through maintenance of vehicles and equipment. Common sources are auto and equipment repair shops, service stations, motor pools, metal working operations, and boat marinas.

Once oil has been used, it can be collected, recycled, and used again for the same job or for a completely different task. An estimated 380 million gallons of used oil are recycled each year in the U.S.

NPS encourages parks to recycle all used oil generated at their facilities. It is preferred that parks recycle used oil rather than burn it for energy. NPS also encourages parks purchase re-refined or bio-based motor oils when economically feasible and appropriate.

FOR MORE INFO...

EPA Office of Solid Waste,
Used Oil Management
Program:

<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/usedoil>

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

Generators of used oil must manage it in accordance with the Standards of Management of Used Oil at 40 CFR Part 279. This standard was written with the presumption that most used oil would be recycled.

State used oil regulations may be more stringent than the federal standard. For instance, California, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Vermont regulate used oil as hazardous waste. State requirements must be reviewed to thoroughly assess compliance status.

HANDLING AND STORAGE

EPA's Used Oil Management Standards require generators to store used oil in structurally sound, non-leaking tanks or containers in good condition. Containers, tanks, and fill pipes must be labeled or clearly marked with the words “Used Oil” (Note: state labeling requirements may differ). Tanks and containers should not be allowed to deteriorate. Any leaks or defects should be corrected immediately. Also, signs should be posted or clear procedures should be implemented to ensure that no other substances are mixed with used oil (e.g., oily waste from a parts washer should **never** be mixed with used oil from a park vehicle). Mixing used oil with other substances, such as spent solvents, may cause the entire mixture to be considered a hazardous waste. Park staff should inspect used oil storage areas periodically to ensure these requirements are met.

Spill Response & Notifications

In the event of a spill of used oil, park personnel must immediately stop and contain the released oil, and properly manage any released oil or other contaminated materials used in the cleanup. The park may respond to spills only with properly trained personnel equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment. Used oil spills may need to be reported to the National Response Center at 1-800-424-8802 if it contains a CERCLA hazardous substance (see the EnviroFact Sheet - “EPCRA: Reporting an Accidental Release (G-1)”). Additional release reporting requirements are specified by most states.

DISPOSAL

All used oil generated by parks should be recycled. The park must ensure that the used oil transporter has a valid EPA ID number. Parks may transport their own used oil off-site without an EPA ID number only if **all** of the following conditions apply:

- The park transports the used oil in its own vehicles;
- Less than 55 gallons are transported at any time; and
- The used oil is transported to a permitted used oil collection center.

Parks should keep a record of all shipments of used oil. Records should include the EPA ID number (if necessary), amount and date of shipment, and the name and permit number(s) of the collection center.

Used Oil Filters

Oil filters must be properly drained before disposal (see checklist item 8). NPS encourages the recycling of used oil filters. The Filter Manufacturer's Council maintains a regulatory hotline and database to encourage the proper management of used oil filters. By calling 1-800-99-FILTER, the proper state management requirements can be accessed. The service also includes a list of companies that transport, process, and recycle used oil filters.

POLLUTION PREVENTION

Recycling

Parks should recycle all used oil and used oil filters. Federal rules allow used oil to be burned in oil-fired space heaters provided certain conditions are met (see checklist item 9).

Source Reduction

- Minimize the amount of *used oil* produced by not changing oil unless it is necessary.
- Purchase bio-based lubricants, engine oils, and hydraulic oils.
- When possible, filter, separate, and recondition used oil to prolong its usable life.
- Purchase re-refined used oil products instead of virgin oil products.
- Practice safe management of used oil—never mix used oil with anything.



USED OIL COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

Checklist Item	Notes
1. Determine whether the state has adopted additional, more stringent standards for facilities that generate, collect, transport or manage used oil.	
2. Establish procedures to prevent used oil from being mixed with hazardous waste. If used oil is mixed with any hazardous waste, assure that the mixture is being managed as a hazardous waste.	
3. Ensure that used oil is not being used as a dust suppressant.	
4. Verify that all used oil storage areas are inspected and that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Containers or tanks are maintained in good condition; • There are no visible signs of leaks; and • Containers, tanks, and piping are labeled with the words "USED OIL" or other state-required terminology. 	
5. Ensure that any release of oil has been stopped, contained and cleaned up by properly trained staff or contractors. If the release was not limited to secondary containment, determine possible reporting requirements.	
6. If used oil is transported off-site by park staff, ensure the following is true: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The park only transports the used oil in its own vehicles; • Less than 55 gallons of used oil is transported at any time,; and • Used oil is transported to a used oil collection center that is properly licensed, permitted or registered by a state, county, or municipal government. 	
7. Confirm that adequate records are maintained documenting off-site shipments of waste oil. They should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity of shipments; • Date of shipments; • Name of transporter and EPA ID number; and • Name of recycling facility or collection center, permit numbers, etc. 	
8. Ensure that oil filters are being managed in accordance with your state's requirements. Minimum federal requirements stipulate that used oil filters are gravity hot drained using one of the following methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puncturing the anti-drainback valve or dome end; • Crushing; • Dismantling; or • Using any other method that will remove oil from the filter. EPA further clarifies gravity hot draining (Volume 57 Federal Register 215214) as draining the oil filter near engine operating temperature and above room temperature for a minimum hot drain time of 12 hours. If oil drips from an oil filter it cannot be considered drained.	
9. Ensure that used oil to be burned for energy recovery in oil-fired space heaters meet the following conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The oil has not been mixed with a hazardous waste; • Only used oil generated by the park is burned; • The heater has a maximum capacity of 0.5 million Btu per hour; and • Combustion gases from the heater are vented to ambient air. 	

