

Managing Used Oil: A Guide for Businesses



Whether you generate hazardous waste or not, if you generate used oil this guide is for you.

Used oil is regulated by both the North Dakota Hazardous Waste Management and the Solid Waste Management Rules. During inspections by the hazardous waste program, we have seen numerous problems with managing used oil. This handout is intended to help you comply with the Hazardous Waste Management rules.

What is used oil?



Used oil is 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. (Animal and vegetable oils are not included in the definition of used oil.)

Oils used as lubricants, hydraulic fluids, heat transfer fluids, bouyants, and for other similar purposes are considered used oil. Some examples are: engine oil, transmission fluid, lubricating oil, hydraulic oil, gear oil, transformer fluid, cutting oil, tempering or quenching oils, greases, and brake fluid.

The used oil definition does not include products such as oil wastes that have never been used (for example: virgin oil spills) antifreeze and kerosene, vegetable and animal oil (even when used as a lubricant) and petroleum distillates used as solvents.


Who must comply with the used oil management rules?

Used oil generator means any person, whose act or process produces used oil, or whose act first causes used oil to be subject to regulation. The used oil rules apply to all generators equally. This means there are not different rules for conditionally exempt, small or large quantity generators. Some common generators are car repair shops, service stations, quick lube shops, government motor pools, railroad and marine terminals, manufacturing and industrial plants with engines or compressors, utilities and machine shops.

Individuals who generate used oil (known as household do-it-yourself used oil) through the maintenance of their own personal vehicles and equipment (known as household do-it-yourselfer used oil generators) are not subject to regulation under the used oil management rules.

Collection centers, transporters, processors, burners, and marketers of used oil must also comply with the used oil regulations.

What management standards must I follow?

- Storage units.** Used oil generators shall not store used oil in units other than tanks or containers. Place containers on a surface that is reasonably impervious to used oil (asphalt, coated concrete). Used oil generators are not required to have secondary containment for their used oil tanks and containers. The Department encourages used oil generators to install secondary containment around their tanks and containers. This aids in controlling spills and makes cleanup easier.
- Condition of units.** Containers and aboveground tanks used to store used oil must be in good condition (no severe rusting, apparent structural defects or deterioration) and not leaking (no visible leaks). Underground tanks need to comply with the North Dakota Underground Storage Tanks Rules, if applicable.
- Labels.** Containers and aboveground tanks used to store used oil must be labeled or marked clearly with the words “Used Oil.” Fill pipes used to transfer used oil into underground storage tanks must be labeled or marked

clearly with the words “Used Oil.”
(This is the most common compliance problem!)


- Response to releases.** Upon seeing a release of used oil a generator must perform the following cleanup steps: stop the release, contain the released used oil, cleanup and manage properly the released used oil and other materials, and repair or replace any leaking used oil storage containers or tanks prior to returning them to service.

What kind of record keeping do I need?

All generators should keep a record of how much used oil was shipped off site. Bills of lading or invoices are acceptable.

Transporters hauling used oil must have a valid State/EPA ID number and a ND Solid WasteTransporter permit. Generators, collection centers, and aggregation points must use transporters with State/EPA ID number and a ND Solid WasteTransporter permit for shipping used oil off site. Generator is allowed to self-transport small amounts of their own used oil, without a State/EPA Identification number or a North Dakota Solid Waste Transporter permit in shipments of less than 55 gallons.

How do I dispose of my used oil?

It is illegal to pour used oil on the ground or down a drain or sewer. It is also illegal to apply used oil to roads for dust suppression. North Dakota prohibits the disposal of used oil in landfills. Therefore, used oil must be recycled, used for energy recovery. The Department maintains a list of used oil jobbers you can contact to assist you in the proper disposal of your used oil.

Can I burn used oil in a space heater?

Generators may burn used oil in used oil-fired space heaters provided that:

- The heater burns only used oil that the owner or operator generates, or used oil received from household do-it-yourselfers.
- The heater is designer to have maximum capacity of not more than 0.5 million BTU’s per hour.
- The combustion gases from the heater are vented to the ambient air.

For more information on used oil contact:



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