

## Quick Guide to New York's Used Oil Regulations

Taking the precautions listed below will help you avoid used oil accidents, limit your legal liability, and protect both your workers and the environment.

### Storing Used Oil

- ◆ Store used oil in sturdy, leakproof metal containers or tanks approved by State or local building and fire codes. To register tanks with DEC call (888) 457-4351.
- ◆ The container or tank must be clearly labeled: "USED OIL"
- ◆ Do not overfill tanks and containers. When full, promptly contact a Permitted industrial waste hauler to empty or remove them.
- ◆ Keep containers closed unless you are adding or removing used oil.
- ◆ Tanks and containers should be placed on an impervious surface, such as concrete, that has no cracks or gaps. To minimize the impact of spills, it is recommended that the storage area be bermed to contain 110% of the volume of the largest tank or container.
- ◆ Store used oil away from drains or ignition sources.

### Inspecting Storage Areas

- ◆ Check tanks and containers at least

monthly for areas of wear, corrosion, and spills or leaks.

- ◆ Keep written records of the tank inspections.

### Accepting Used Oil

- ◆ Service establishments that sell at least 500 gallons per year of new oil and performs vehicle servicing must accept from the public at no charge up to 5 gallons of used oil per person per day.
- ◆ Retail establishments that sell at least 1000 gallons per year of new oil must either accept used oil from the public, as service establishments do, or contract to have another service or retail establishment accept it on their behalf.
- ◆ Post a sign stating "WE ACCEPT USED OIL FOR RECYCLING AT NO CHARGE."
- ◆ Retail establishments that arrange to have another entity accept used oil on their behalf must post a sign stating the name and address of the contracted establishment.
- ◆ Remember: When you change motor oil for customers, it is against the law to charge them a fee for used oil disposal.

### Recycling or Disposing of Used Oil

- ◆ Contract with a Permitted industrial hauler to pick up your used oil for recycling or disposal.
- ◆ If allowed by your municipality, you may burn your used oil in an approved space heater. The space heater must be less than one-half million BTUs/hour, vented to the outside, and contain no

chemical waste. You can burn only used oil from your own operation or from do-it-yourself oil changers.

- ◆ The following fluids are handled as used oil: used motor oil, hydraulic fluid, power steering fluid, transmission fluid, brake fluid, gear oil.

### Managing Used Oil Filters

Follow these steps when changing oil filters.

- ◆ Remove the filter from the engine while warm and immediately drain free flowing oil into your used oil drum or tank.
- ◆ Puncture the filter dome. Place the filter on a rack to drain into a used oil drum or tank at or near engine operating temperature for 12 hours.
- ◆ Filters may also be crushed or dismantled in addition to hot draining.
- ◆ If possible, recycle your used oil filters at scrap metal yards or with a filter recycler.

### Handling Shop Towels and Absorbents Containing Used Oil

- ◆ Store shop towels and absorbents in separate metal containers with tight-fitting lids.
- ◆ Label containers "Contaminated Shop Towels Only" and "Oily Waste Absorbents Only," as appropriate.
- ◆ If shop towels contain no free-flowing liquids, send them to a industrial laundry.
- ◆ Treat shop towels and absorbents containing used oil as hazardous wastes until properly managed.

## **Improper Management of Used Oil Is Against the Law**

It is illegal to discard used oil in a dumpster, down a sewer, in the water, or on the ground. In addition, any mixture of used oil and solvents may be considered a hazardous waste, which could make disposal costs high.

## **Why Is Used Oil Regulated?**

Used oil is regulated because it contains harmful contaminants, such as benzene and lead, picked up during the operation of a vehicle. Safe management and disposal of used oil protects not just drinking water, fish, and land, but also the workers in your shop.

## **Why Does It Make Good Business Sense to Reduce Used Oil Spills?**

Used oil spills cost money and take time to clean up. Even minor spills can cause major contamination problems. You are legally required to clean up any spills, and you may also be subject to government fines.

## **Preparing for a Spill**

- ◆ Keep cleanup and containment materials ready for immediate use.
- ◆ Write an emergency response plan, post the instructions in an easily visible spot in the shop, and train employees on the procedures.
- ◆ If you have an oil spill, immediately call NYSDEC Spills Hotline at (800) 457-7362.

## **If You Need Help**

If you want more information or copies of the used oil regulations, call the Bureau of Hazardous Waste Management at (518) 485-8988.

If you want free, confidential technical assistance or additional publications for vehicle maintenance shops, call the Pollution Prevention Unit at (800) 462-6553. Out of State call (518) 457-2553.

## **Pollution Prevention Tips**

Good housekeeping reduces spills and protects you against liability. Here are several suggestions for limiting used oil problems in your shop.

- ◆ Place drip pans under cars.
- ◆ Use different pans for used oil and for parts covered with solvents.
- ◆ Fill drip pans only half-way and then use a funnel to pour the oil into a drum or tank.
- ◆ Use dry cleanup methods when you do have spills. You can use (1) reusable absorbent pads, (2) a bristle broom and brush, or (3) mops that absorb only oily liquids. Wring out or pour the used oil you clean up into a container or tank. Clean any leftover used oil with a rag. Discard the cleanup debris in a separate container from the used oil. As a last resort, use clay absorbents or sawdust, or alternatives such as corn cobs or peat.

# *Used Oil Regulations*

A Quick Guide for Auto Repair Shops



New York State Department of  
Environmental Conservation  
Pollution Prevention Unit



George E. Pataki  
Governor



John P. Cahill  
Commissioner