

Hazardous Waste Factsheet

Does Your Business Generate Hazardous Waste?

Good Hazardous Waste Management is Good Business

Hazardous wastes are common in small businesses as well as large. Even small quantities of improperly managed hazardous wastes can have major impacts on worker health and safety, environmental quality, property value, and legal liability.

Proper management of hazardous waste is wise from a business point of view. Business owners are legally and financially responsible for the proper handling of their hazardous wastes. Violators are subject to enforcement actions that may include fines. Proper hazardous waste management is necessary to maintain your ability to get insurance or bank loans. It also protects you, your workers, and others from serious illness and injury.

An important part of doing business in Thurston County is handling your wastes in the safest manner possible to protect your investment and our shared water resources. Disposal of hazardous waste in the trash, down a drain, on the ground, or into surface water is prohibited by the Thurston County Nonpoint Source Pollution ordinance.

Some typical businesses that generate (produce) hazardous wastes are auto shops, painters, printers, medical clinics, and dry cleaners. Some examples of less obvious generators are landscapers, general contractors, and beauty shops, to name a few.

Is Your Business Subject to Hazardous Waste Regulations?

To determine if your business is subject to hazardous waste handling requirements, you need to answer two questions: does your business generate hazardous waste, and if so, how much?

1) Does your business generate hazardous waste?

A hazardous waste is a solid or liquid material that could pose dangers to human health, property, or the environment.

A waste is considered hazardous if it is:

- Ignitable (with a flash point of less than 140 degrees F),
Corrosive (with a pH below 2.0 or above 12.5),
Reactive (explosives, unstable chemicals),
Toxic (poisonous), or
Persistent (non-biodegradable, containing chlorine compounds);
OR
- Is listed by the state's "dangerous waste" list, published by the Washington Department of Ecology.

“Business owners are legally and financially responsible for the proper handling of their hazardous wastes.”

Thurston County Public
Health and Social Services
Environmental Health Division

412 Lilly Rd. NE
Olympia, WA 98506-5132
Hazardous Waste Hotline:
360-867-2664

TDD Line: 360-867-2603

<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehhw/index.html>



Check the “Material Safety Data Sheets” (MSDS) for your products to learn if they contain any of these hazardous characteristics or meet these criteria. It is important to note that products not originally designated as hazardous may become contaminated during use to the point where they would then be designated as hazardous waste. For additional help, call the Thurston County Hazardous Waste Assistance Line at (360) 867-2664.

2) **How much hazardous waste does your business generate?**

If your business:

- Generates less than 220 pounds (about 27 gallons) of hazardous waste/ month,
- Generates less than 2.2 pounds of extremely hazardous waste (certain chemicals)/month
- Stores no more than 2,200 pounds (roughly five 55-gallon drums) of waste at any time
- Manages its waste properly,

then your business is classified as a “small quantity generator (SQG).” This means your business is subject to local regulations on hazardous material management; however, you are conditionally exempt from the state Dangerous Waste Regulations.

If your business generates more than 220 pounds of hazardous wastes during any month, you must comply with the Washington State Dangerous Waste Regulations. For more information, call the Department of Ecology Southwest Regional Office, (360) 407-6300, and ask for the Hazardous Waste/Toxics Reduction section.

Even if your business only produces a few pounds or gallons of hazardous waste, you are considered a small-quantity generator. Note that home businesses that use hazardous products, such as jewelry making or photography, must also comply with local regulations for small-quantity generators.

Local Regulations for Small-Quantity Generators

All small quantity generators are subject to the Thurston County Nonpoint Source Pollution Ordinance. The goal of this ordinance is to protect ground and surface water from hazardous waste contamination, and requires small-quantity generators to:

- Properly dispose of hazardous wastes either by recycling or through a permitted hazardous waste management facility, and
- Provide secondary containment for on-site storage of hazardous materials and petroleum products.

The ordinance also strongly recommends that businesses have adequate plans and preparations in case of a spill. To get details on the Nonpoint Source Pollution Ordinance, see “For More Information.” Thurston County operates a hazardous waste disposal program for small quantity generators; call (360) 867-2664 to request more information about this service.

For More Information

Specialists from the Thurston County Business Pollution Prevention Program are available to answer questions on your generator status, what regulations apply to your operation, and how to reduce, recycle, and manage your wastes. We also offer free on-site technical assistance to businesses in Thurston County. Please contact the Hazardous Waste Assistance Line at (360) 867-2664, Monday through Friday, or at TDD (360) 867-2603, or visit our website at www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehhw/index.html.