

Hazardous Waste Factsheet

“Store waste in a container made of the same material (plastic, metal, or glass) that the original product came in.”

Storing and Labeling Hazardous Waste

The Problem

As a business owner, you are responsible for the proper storage and disposal of all hazardous waste that you generate. Businesses that use hazardous materials or produce hazardous waste should also be aware of local fire codes that apply to storage. This fact sheet provides small quantity generators with basic information about hazardous waste containment.

Accumulation Areas

An *accumulation area* is space set aside for storing hazardous waste prior to proper disposal or on-site recycling. In your accumulation area, it is best to:

1. Restrict access to only those employees who regularly dispose of waste and are who trained in health and safety issues and waste management regulations.
2. Place waste containers away from frequently traveled areas such as walkways, parking areas, or customer reception areas.
3. Mark the area with a sign that reads "Hazardous Waste Accumulation Area."
4. Keep a spill kit nearby. Have appropriate absorbents and neutralizing materials on hand and a plan for using them.

A *satellite accumulation area* is a location near any point of waste generation where hazardous waste is initially accumulated in containers, during routine operations, before being consolidated at a designated accumulation area. The area must be under the control of the operator of the process generating the waste or secured at all times to prevent improper additions of wastes into the satellite containers.

Storage Containers

Containers used to hold hazardous wastes should:

1. Be as small as possible and have a tight-fitting lid.
2. Be checked for rust, bulges, dents, or leaks. Isolate defective containers in a storage area with secondary containment or simply place inside a larger non-leaking container - or transfer the waste to a labeled non-defective container.
3. Be compatible with the waste you put into them. For example, do not put acid in unlined metal drums or solvents in plastic drums.
4. The container that the product came in may be suitable for storing the waste if the container is in good condition and labeled correctly. Store waste in a container made of the same type of material (plastic, metal, or glass) the product came in.
5. *Secondary containment* should be used to catch liquid spills. A portable plastic tub, a metal drum, a spill pallet, or a dead-end sump all provide adequate secondary containment. For more information, refer to the fact sheet "Secondary Containment," available from the Business Pollution Prevention Program.

Thurston County Public
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360-867-2664

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



Labeling

Labeling hazardous waste containers is simple to do and reduces liability. Labels can prevent spills, accidents, sloppiness and wasteful use of a chemical product; prevent unintentional – and unwanted – mixing of different wastes; and eliminate costly laboratory testing of unknown materials. Pre-printed labels can be purchased from safety equipment supply stores. They can be computer-generated or even handwritten. In general, it's a good idea to label containers with:

1. The words "hazardous waste."
2. A description of the waste in practical terms (such as "used antifreeze," "dirty spray gun cleaner," "paint waste").
3. A description of major risks associated with the waste and necessary precautions to protect employees (such as why it is hazardous and what harmful effects it can cause). For example, words such as "flammable" or "causes burns" could minimize the potential for accidents.

Some suggestions for eliminating labeling errors are to:

1. Label containers when they are first used to contain wastes.
2. Remove old labels or apply new ones over old ones.
3. Label small bottles (such as spray bottles, dispensers, and cans) when you dispense smaller volumes into them.
4. Protect labels with plastic covers or clear tape.
5. Use permanent ink to write on labels.
6. If multiple labels are needed, place them near each other and where they can easily be seen.

Empty Containers

Containers are empty when all wastes or contents have been properly removed and less than one inch of waste or no more than one percent of the total capacity is left, whichever is the lesser amount. Containers that held acutely hazardous waste or any pesticide marked with "Danger" or "Warning" labels must be rinsed at least three times with an appropriate cleaner or solvent. The rinse residue must be used, or managed as hazardous waste.

Now-empty containers that were used to store flammable and combustible liquids also may be regulated by the International Fire Code. Check with your local Fire Marshal for any additional safety requirements.

If your containers meet the definitions of "empty" (as above), after the lids have been removed, they can be reused, recycled by a drum reconditioning firm, put in the dumpster or taken to the local transfer station or landfill.

First, try to reuse or recycle your container. Three companies that recondition used drums are:

Palex Container Systems, Seattle: 800-451-3471

Seattle Barrel Co., Seattle: 800-556-4271 or 206-622-7218

Flotation Services (plastic only), Bellevue: 425-453-1139

For More Information

For more information about storing hazardous materials or other waste-related issues, please call the Thurston County Business Pollution Prevention Program at (360) 867-2664, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., or TDD (360) 867-2603, or see our website at <http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehhw/index.html>.