
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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Used Oil Filters

Since used oil is a state-listed hazardous waste, undrained oil filters are strictly regulated under the Hazardous Waste Rules. However, an exemption provided at Env-Hw 401.03(b)(10) allows many drained oil filters to be managed less stringently when they meet the following criteria:

1. The filters are non-terne plated.
2. The filters have not been mixed with any hazardous wastes identified in Env-Hw 402.
3. The filters have been drained using one of the following methods:
 - a. Puncturing the filter anti-drain back valve or the filter dome end and hot draining.
 - b. Hot draining and crushing.
 - c. Dismantling and hot-draining.
 - d. Any other equivalent hot draining method that will remove used oil.

Terne plated filters do not qualify for the aforementioned exemption. However, when drained using the above criteria *and* “processed,” i.e., crushed, then terne filters can often be recycled as an excluded scrap metal; with reference given to Env-Hw 401.03(a)(9), Env-Hw 103.49 and Env-Hw 104.28.

Discussion

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services encourages the recycling of used oil and properly drained oil filters. Used oil and scrap metal are valuable resources.

The above exemption criteria for non-terne filters mirrors EPA’s exclusion set forth in 40 CFR 261.4(b)(13). Most modern filters, particularly those manufactured in the United States, are no longer terne plated. However, there are exceptions, notably in the heavy equipment industry. Terne is an alloy of tin and lead that can render some filters as being hazardous due to the content of lead used in the plating process.

EPA defines “hot draining” as draining the oil filter near engine-operating temperature and above room temperature. This means that filters should be removed from warm engines and then set to drain in an area where the temperature will consistently remain above 60°F. throughout the draining process. In order to ensure that oil has been removed to the greatest extent possible, it is recommended that filters be drained for a minimum of 12 hours.

The drained oil should be recycled following the requirements of Env-Hw 807.

Commercial businesses are well advised to hire vendors specifically suited to recycling large numbers of oil filters. However, residents with just a few filters, such as do-it-yourselfers, may be able to recycle their filters through a municipal transfer station or at a local garage.

Since July 1989, communities have had the authority to assess an additional fee on motor vehicle registrations for the purpose of collecting and disposing of motor vehicle waste such as used motor oil, filters, tires and batteries (see DES fact sheet WMD-SW-23). Additionally, political subdivisions and other government entities, motor vehicle inspection stations, and non-profit organizations that focus on waste management and recycling issues are eligible to receive grant monies to establish used oil collection centers to collect do-it-yourself used oil and filters.

Many New Hampshire municipalities have taken advantage of grants to purchase filter collection bins, filter crushers, containment units, spill kits, storage tanks, drums, and other equipment.

Summary

Used oil filters often contain a significant amount of used oil. In order to be considered for exemption from regulation under the New Hampshire Hazardous Waste Rules, used oil filters need to be hot drained using one of the discussed methods. In addition, terne plated filters need to undergo processing/crushing. Once drained, filters and oil should be collected for recycling and should be managed to prevent oil releases to the environment.

For More Information

For more information on the management of used oil, filters, or funding opportunities for used oil and filter collection centers, please contact the DES Used Oil Program at (603) 271-6424 or toll-free 1-888-TAKEOIL, or DES Waste Management Division, ORCB - Used Oil Program, PO Box 95, Concord, NH 03302-0095; www.des.nh.gov .