
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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Rust Proofing Using Petroleum Based Oils

In an effort to help prevent premature rusting of the undercarriage of cars and light trucks, vehicles owners have resorted to a number of practices for applying various substances to the vehicle. One of the practices that have been around for a number of years is the application of petroleum based oils such as virgin and used “on-spec” motor oil, bar and chain oil and other related substances.

The Department of Environmental Services does not recommend this practice as there are other proven methods for the control of vehicle rusting that are more environmentally friendly, including the fact that most modern vehicles are manufactured with rust resistant materials. However, the practice of “oiling” underbodies does still occur and is performed by both auto repair facilities and individual vehicle owners.

The application of waste or used oil is prohibited. And although the practice of applying virgin petroleum products to vehicle underbodies is not specifically prohibited under current environmental regulations, there are several regulations that do need to be addressed. As a general rule, the discharging of any petroleum product onto the ground is specifically prohibited and must be avoided.

As the spray application of oil will result in at least some material not adhering to the metal surface, this residual oil must be properly collected, contained and reused or disposed of in an acceptable manner. At no time should the oil be applied while the vehicle is on a non-impervious surface such as gravel, loam or sand. Any oil that is discharged onto the ground is strictly prohibited and intentional discharges can result in fines, penalties and cleanup costs.

DISCLAIMER: Information contained in this fact sheet is current as of November 1, 2008. Statutory or regulatory changes that may occur after that date may cause part or all of the information to become invalid. If there are any questions concerning the current status of this information, please contact us at (603) 271-3644 or email us at ORCB.WMD@des.nh.gov.