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Handling Paint Waste from Your Business

Your business might toss its empty paint cans, leftover paint and used rags in a dumpster, but is that disposal practice acceptable? Contractors, auto collision repair shops, metal fabricators, wood finishers and other businesses that handle paint need to be aware of the environmental regulations for paint-related waste.

This fact sheet outlines some of the environmental requirements for handling various kinds of paint-related wastes. It doesn't cover every environmental requirement, though, and should not be used as your sole resource in understanding the regulations. If you have other questions, contact your local Ohio EPA District Office or Small Business Assistance Office (SBAO) with questions about your environmental responsibilities.

It's important that you know the regulations and comply with them before you start your business because noncompliance can lead to violations or fines.

The first step in ensuring that your company is complying with the regulations is to make sure that you know about all the wastes that are generated from your painting business. If you have a material that can no longer be used, it is considered a waste. From here, you must determine if each waste is hazardous or nonhazardous BEFORE you dispose of it.

Nonhazardous waste includes trash, packaging, pallets, cardboard and similar materials that are commonly generated at businesses. Many businesses, however, also generate hazardous wastes. There are two ways in which a waste can be classified as hazardous. A listed hazardous waste is one that appears on any of the lists published in Ohio's hazardous waste regulations. There are many different wastes contained on these lists, including discarded chemicals, solvents and other process-related wastes. A waste also can be hazardous if it possesses any one of four hazardous waste characteristics. These characteristics include: ignitability, corrosivity, reactivity and toxicity.

If you need more information on how to identify hazardous waste, refer to the SBAO's fact sheet *Identifying Your Hazardous Waste* or call Ohio EPA for assistance. As a waste generator, you must also keep information in file to show how you evaluated each waste stream and how you determined whether each was hazardous or non-hazardous. In the event your business is ever inspected by Ohio EPA's hazardous waste division, this information will be requested.

Leftover Paint

The best way to reduce the amount of leftover paint you have is to purchase only the amount you need for a particular job. Besides this, there are other ways you can manage leftover paint instead of throwing it away:

- make arrangements to return unopened, unused containers of paint to your vendor;
- use leftover paint for touch up work, as a primer or undercoat;
- combine leftover paint with other compatible paints, re-tint it and use it;
- give it to another business or organization who can use it, or contact a local waste exchange program.

Any leftover paint that cannot be reused or recycled must be properly disposed of. Under Ohio's regulations, a business owner must determine if a waste is hazardous or not BEFORE it is disposed of. All hazardous waste must be sent to a permitted hazardous waste facility for disposal and CANNOT be thrown in the dumpster, on the ground or put down a septic system.

Some paint formulations may contain toxic metals (mercury, lead, chromium, cadmium, etc.) that will cause the waste paint to be a hazardous waste. Other paints can be regulated as hazardous because of their ignitability or if they've been mixed with spent solvents.

Solvent Waste

Solvents are often used for equipment cleaning, paint stripping and paint thinners. Spent solvents are usually hazardous wastes due to their flammability and/or chemical constituents (e.g., xylene, toluene, acetone, methylene chloride). Solvent wipers also can be considered hazardous. Before you dispose of any solvent waste, you must determine if the waste is hazardous. If hazardous, solvent waste must be sent to a permitted hazardous waste disposal or recycling facility.

Often businesses will use their solvent once before disposing it. Some tips to help you extend the life of the solvents you use include:

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Household Hazardous Waste Exclusion

If you are working on residential job sites, the hazardous waste you generate may fall under Ohio's household hazardous waste exemption. For wastes that meet the definition of household hazardous waste, you are not required to comply with the hazardous waste rules. However, it is strongly recommended that you properly manage and dispose of these wastes.

Options for managing the waste include working with the homeowner to ensure that wastes get delivered to a household hazardous waste collection site. You also can take the waste to an industrial or hazardous waste facility for disposal. You should note that your local solid waste landfill will be unable to accept any liquid wastes (such as liquid paints, solvents or wastewater). You **SHOULD NOT** put household hazardous wastes down a septic system or on the ground.

To find out more about Ohio's household hazardous waste exemption, contact the Division of Hazardous Waste Management, Technical Support Unit at (614) 644-2917.

- Use a two-stage cleaning process. When the first bath doesn't clean, replace it with the second bath and refill the second bath with clean solvent. Properly dispose of spent solvent;
- Reuse your solvents. Allow the solids to settle, then pour off and reuse the clean solvent. Use this solvent to do your initial cleaning, saving the new solvent (a smaller amount) for the final cleaning;
- Recycle the solvent by distilling it either on-site or off-site. If you distill solvent on-site, the sludge and any filters will likely be a hazardous waste and must be managed and disposed of properly. Air permits might also be required for a larger solvent still.

Solvent Rags or Wipers

Solvent-soaked rags or wipers used for cleaning usually meet the definition of a hazardous waste because of the contaminants present (e.g., xylene, toluene, acetone) or because of their ignitability.

If you dispose of any solvent contaminated wipers, these must first be evaluated to determine if they are hazardous waste. You **CANNOT** throw these in the dumpster, unless you can prove they are not hazardous.

Another option for managing solvent wipers is to send them to a commercial laundry or dry cleaner. Under Ohio's regulations, this is considered a recycling activity and the wipers would not be considered a hazardous waste. You can

get more information on commercial laundry facilities from Ohio EPA's Division of Hazardous Waste Management.

Empty Cans and Containers

Paint, thinner and other materials that are left in cans and containers may be a hazardous waste unless the containers are considered "RCRA empty." A can or container is considered RCRA empty if all the material has been removed using practices (e.g., pouring or pumping) commonly employed to remove the material from that type of container; and

- no more than one inch of residue remains on the bottom, OR
- no more than three percent by weight of the total capacity of the container remains in the container if the container is less than or equal to 100 gallons, OR
- no more than 0.3 percent by weight of the total capacity of the container remains in the container if the container is greater than 110 gallons.

Metal containers that are RCRA empty can usually be recycled as scrap metal or disposed of in the dumpster (as solid waste). You should note, though, that landfills won't accept any waste liquids, including paint, so you must ensure that the containers have no free liquids.

If a container is not RCRA empty and you want to dispose of it, you'll have to evaluate the contents of the container and, if hazardous, properly dispose of this waste.

Paint Booth Filters

You will need to determine if your paint booth filters are hazardous. Filters that contain paint with heavy metal pigments (e.g., lead, chromium, cadmium, etc.) may be hazardous, depending on the level of metals present. Depending upon the types of paint used at your shop, paint filters have a good chance of being a nonhazardous waste. To help keep filters from becoming a hazardous waste, ensure that spray guns are not cleaned or emptied into the filters.

If your filters are nonhazardous you can dispose of them as solid waste. Be aware that your local solid waste landfill may ask you to document to them that the filters are nonhazardous.

Paint Chips or Residues from Paint Removal Activities

Old paint formulations commonly contained toxic metal pigments (lead, mercury, chromium, cadmium, etc.). Buildings and other structures built before 1978 probably contain some paint with lead or other heavy metals. If you are working on an older structure, it's likely that any paint scrapings, paint chips or spent sand blasting media you generate will be a hazardous waste.

All wastes from paint removal activities must be evaluated to determine if they're hazardous wastes. In this situation, you may need to have samples of the paint residue collected and tested. For any paint removal process, you also must take steps to prevent waste from contaminating the soil or water. Under Ohio's air pollution control regulations, it is also common to require some type of containment or vacuum system to contain airborne paint waste.

Wastewater

Industrial wastewater from painting can be generated from cleaning brushes, sprayers and other equipment or from operating a spray booth. If you are power washing equipment or structures prior to painting, this is also considered industrial wastewater. It is NOT permissible to discharge industrial wastewater on the ground, into storm sewers or into on-site septic systems.

Under Ohio EPA's regulations, options for handling industrial wastewater include obtaining a permit to discharge directly into surface water or discharging to a public wastewater treatment plant.

If you are cleaning your painting equipment back at your business location, another option is to install a wastewater holding tank and have the wastewater hauled to an industrial waste disposal company.

Industrial Wastewater: Direct Discharges

Any discharge of industrial wastewater to "waters of the state" will require a discharge permit (called an NPDES permit) from Ohio EPA. Examples of waters of the state include streams, rivers, lakes, ponds, marshes, watercourses, waterways and springs. Wastewater discharges entering a conveyance system (like a ditch or storm sewer) that leads to a waterway also require an NPDES permit. You cannot discharge industrial wastewater from your painting business to any waters of the state unless you have received a permit from Ohio EPA.

Industrial Wastewater: Indirect Discharges

If your business is connected to a public wastewater treatment plant (called a POTW), you may be able to discharge wastewater directly to the plant. However, wastewater treatment plants are not designed to handle wastes like metals, solvents or other chemicals. They are designed to handle sewage-related wastes and wastewater. Because of this, the treatment plant can require that you conduct "pretreatment" (e.g., removal of chemicals, solids, etc.) before discharging your wastewater to them. If you want to discharge industrial wastewater to a local treatment plant, you need to discuss these activities with the treatment plant directly. Permission to discharge to the POTW and/or obtaining a permit may be necessary.

If you are going to be working at different job sites and will be generating wastewater from cleaning your painting equipment, it is important to talk with the POTW BEFORE you begin the job. You must get permission from the POTW to discharge wastewater to them.

Constructing a Wastewater Holding Tank

If you do not have a permit to discharge wastewater directly or permission to discharge to a POTW, you must find another way to manage your wastewater. As mentioned, you cannot discharge wastewater directly onto the ground, down a septic system or into a storm sewer.

If you are cleaning equipment back at your business location and generating wastewater, another option for handling the wastewater is to collect it in a holding tank and have it hauled to a disposal facility. If you construct a wastewater holding tank, this activity requires a permit-to-install from Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water.

You can contact your local Ohio EPA district office, Division of Surface Water for more information on the wastewater discharge and permitting requirements. If you are unsure of who your local POTW contact is, you also can call the Division of Surface Water for assistance.

Pollution Prevention

You can probably save money and reduce your regulatory burdens if you explore ways of preventing paint related waste. This can include reducing waste streams, emissions or recycling.

Pollution prevention options for paint waste can include:

- using high-efficiency spray equipment;
- using nonhazardous solvents and cleaning materials;
- good housekeeping practices to minimize spills, leaks, etc.;
- recycling materials such as used solvents;
- keeping a good inventory of material and using up all products before they become outdated.

Contact Ohio EPA's Office of Pollution Prevention at (614) 644-6439 for more information on pollution prevention opportunities for your business.

How do I find out more about companies that dispose of hazardous waste?

Ohio EPA's Division of Hazardous Waste Management (DHWM) has a list of companies that are permitted to accept hazardous waste for treatment or disposal. For more information, contact DHWM at (614) 644-2956.

Where can I get more help?

If you have any questions about evaluating or managing paint-related waste, contact Ohio EPA's Division of Hazardous Waste Management at (614) 644-2956 or your local district office. For questions on handling wastewater from your business, contact Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water. See map for the district office in your area.

You also can contact Ohio EPA's Small Business Assistance Office (SBAO) for *free* and *confidential* help on the regulations at (800) 329-7518.

Central District Office (CDO)
3232 Alum Creek Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43207
tel: (614) 728-3778

Southeast District Office (SEDO)
2195 Front Street
Logan, Ohio 43138
tel: (740) 385-8501

Southwest District Office (SWDO)
401 East 5th Street
Dayton, Ohio 45402
tel: (937) 285-6357

Northeast District Office (NEDO)
2110 E. Aurora Road
Twinsburg, Ohio 44087
tel: (330) 963-1200

Northwest District Office (NWDO)
347 N. Dunbridge Road
Bowling Green, Ohio 43402
tel: (419) 352-8461



Publications for Paint Wastes

August 2000

Ohio EPA, Small Business Assistance Office
3232 Alum Creek Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43207-3417
(800) 329-7518 or (614) 728-8573

The following publications may be helpful to you in understanding the environmental regulations that apply to your paint-related wastes. To get your FREE copies, complete this form and return it to the Small Business Assistance Office.

- Ohio EPA Resource Guide**
Learn more about the Ohio EPA and resources available to you. Ohio EPA, Small Business Assistance Office, April 1999.
- Small Business Environmental Compliance Self-Assessment Guide (booklet)**
Do a self-check of your compliance with Ohio EPA's regulations. Ohio EPA, Small Business Assistance Office, June 2000.
- Getting Copies of Ohio EPA's Regulations (fact sheet)**
Need to get a copy of the regulations? This fact sheet will explain how. Ohio EPA, Small Business Assistance Office, February 2000.
- Pollution Prevention, Getting Started (fact sheet)**
Learn how to reduce waste at your business. Ohio EPA, Office of Pollution Prevention, January 1996.
- Pollution Prevention in Painting and Coating Operations (fact sheet)**
Ohio EPA, Office of Pollution Prevention, September 1994.
- Environmental Laws (fact sheet)**
An overview of environmental regulations. Ohio EPA, Small Business Assistance Office, September 1998
- How Your Small Business Can Get in Touch With EPA Air Requirements (brochure)**
Ohio EPA, Small Business Assistance Program, Division of Air Pollution Control.
- Air Pollution Requirements for the Painting (fact sheet)**
Ohio EPA, Small Business Assistance Program, Division of Air Pollution Control, February 1997.
- Does Your Facility Generate Industrial Wastewaters? (fact sheet)**
U.S. EPA #EPA905-F-94-002/September 1994.
- Identifying Your Hazardous Waste (fact sheet)**
Ohio EPA, Small Business Assistance Office, February 2000.
- Selecting a TSD Facility to Handle Your Hazardous Wastes (fact sheet)**
Ohio EPA, Small Business Assistance Office, March 1997.

- Guidance on the Management of Solvent-Contaminated Rags and Wipers**
Ohio EPA, Division of Hazardous Waste Management, March 1994.
- Understanding the Hazardous Waste Rules - A Handbook for Small Business - 1996 Update**
U.S. EPA Solid Waste & Emergency Response, EPA 530-K-95-001 June 1996.
- Management of Lead-bearing Paint Waste from Lead Paint Abatement**
Ohio EPA, Division of Hazardous Waste Management, July 1994.
- Working as a Paint Contractor? Know Your Ohio EPA Regulations**
Ohio EPA, Small Business Assistance Office, May 2000.

To Order Call: 800-329-7518
Fax: 614-728-8579

OR Fold and Mail to: Ohio EPA, SBAO
3232 Alum Creek Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43207

Name _____

Company _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Ohio EPA
Small Business Assistance Office
3232 Alum Creek Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43207-3417