



### Prescribed Industrial Waste - Coolants

The general environmental effects of coolants are largely governed by the type of glycol and the presence of heavy metals such as lead and copper. Improper disposal of spent coolant, such as radiator fluid, can result in heavy metal contamination of soils, groundwater and other water bodies, and presents a significant danger to both aquatic and terrestrial food chains.

Although glycols will readily biodegrade in soil or water, when they are inappropriately disposed of in stormwater drains and sumps, they place an excessive oxygen demand on the receiving environments these systems drain to. It is therefore imperative that used coolants are managed responsibly.

#### Disposing of Spent Coolants

- Ensure that all 'free-draining' spent coolant from radiators and other industrial machinery is captured and stored in appropriate containers/drums. Store spent coolant drums and containers on a sealed, bunded and undercover area.
- Dispose of coolants (e.g. radiator fluid) by discharging these materials to the sewer. You can only do this if your business has a Trade Waste Agreement with the local water authority, and the local water authority approves this.
- Otherwise, coolants must be collected and disposed of as a Prescribed Industrial Waste. An EPA approved contractor can pick up your spent coolant and transport it off site. An EPA Waste Transport Certificate must be filled out correctly and be kept for 24 months if in hard copy.

#### Managing Spent Coolants

- Consider the possibility of recycling used coolant in-house with an approved coolant recycling system. These systems can offer modest savings to your business by reducing the costs associated with waste disposal.
- Disposal problems can be minimised by extending coolant life. Extended life products and maintenance methods (such as filtration) are now being developed by many coolant manufacturers.

## Environmental Guidelines



- When servicing and repairing engine cooling systems, reuse the drained coolant when it is acceptable and appropriate to do so.
- Consider using coolant containing propylene glycol in preference to those with ethylene glycol. Propylene glycol is a safer alternative to ethylene glycol, and is much less toxic to humans and animals.

### Please Note

- Under no circumstances should any volume of spent coolant (or wastewater containing coolant) be dumped onto the ground or allowed to enter stormwater drains, soak wells or any water bodies.
- Do not mix spent coolant with any other liquid wastes. Used coolant must be collected and treated as a separate waste item.
- Avoid directing wastewaters generated when flushing cooling systems towards oil separation systems. Oil separators will not remove the contaminants (e.g. heavy metals) and chemical additives found within coolants. The addition of coolant into these systems can also significantly decrease their efficiency.
- Do not dispose of spent coolant to septic systems. It will kill the micro-organisms these systems depend on in order to work effectively.
- Do not store drums containing spent coolant on open ground or in areas where they are exposed. Keep drums covered and in a properly bunded area.

### Further Information



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**Note: This Good Practice Guideline is not a complete statement of law relevant to this topic. Further legal advice must be sought if complete information is required.**