

Guidance for Pollution Prevention

Safe storage and disposal of used oils: GPP 8

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This guidance has been produced by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). For Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland this document provides guidance on environmental legislation. These guidelines are not endorsed by the Environment Agency as regulatory guidance in England.

For guidance on environmental regulations in England go to www.gov.uk.
To find the relevant regulations visit www.legislation.gov.uk.

Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP) documents are based on relevant legislation and reflect current good practice. Following this guidance will help you manage the environmental responsibilities to prevent pollution and comply with the law.

If you cause pollution or allow it to occur, you will be committing a criminal offence. Following these guidelines will help you reduce the likelihood of a pollution incident. If one does occur contact the environmental regulator immediately on the relevant incident hotline number: In Northern Ireland and Scotland call **0800 80 70 60**, in Wales call **0300 065 3000**.

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Who is the guidance for?

This guidance is for anyone who stores and disposes of used oils. The guidance applies to activities ranging from a single engine oil change to those of large industrial users.

1.2 Regulatory background

Waste

The Duty of Care Regulations apply to the storage and handling of waste materials, including waste oils. Storage must be safe and secure, and the producer of the waste must make sure that anyone removing the waste is authorised to do so, and can provide details of the final destination of the waste, whether it is for re-use, recycling or disposal. (see Reference 1: Duty of Care: Codes of Practice)

Waste minimisation is the preferred option for waste management, and the first thing to consider when applying the waste hierarchy. A waste minimisation review will help you save money on raw materials and waste disposal costs. Free independent information on **waste prevention, recycling and recovery** is available from:

In Northern Ireland: WRAP Northern Ireland: WRAP Northern Ireland is funded by the Northern Ireland Government to deliver the Rethink Waste Programme.

<http://www.wrapni.org.uk/category/subject/resource-efficiency-0>

In Scotland: Resource Efficient Scotland, the Scottish Government programme designed to help reduce costs by implementing resource efficiencies in energy, water, raw materials and waste management. <http://www.resourceefficientscotland.com/>

In Wales: For support on using resources (energy, materials and water) more efficiently. <https://www.resourceefficiencywales.co.uk/about.html#>

WRAP in Wales; <http://www.wrapcymru.org.uk/waste-and-recycling-sector>. Provides guidance on disposal and handling of waste materials.

Oil Storage tanks

The storage of waste oils is covered by the **Oil Storage Regulations** that apply to your country. Highlighted text in these guidelines indicates areas that must be complied with under these Regulations

Refer to Reference 4: GPP2: Above Ground Oil Storage Tanks for full details or contact your local Environmental Regulator.

Environmental permitting, Waste management licences and PPC permits

Many sites where waste oil is stored are also regulated under:

In **Wales** the Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR) 2016

In **Northern Ireland and Scotland** Waste Management licensing (WML) or the Pollution Prevention and Control (PPC) Regulations.

These Regulations cover the storage of waste oils and are intended to protect the whole environment. There may be additional requirements under these Regulations that are not mentioned in this guidance. Always comply with the terms of your licence or permit, and for further information contact your local environmental regulator; contact details are at the end of these guidelines.

1.3 Pollution Prevention

It is important to understand how activities could affect the environment and cause pollution. Think about what pollution linkages there are (see Figure 1.).



Figure 1: Example of a pollution linkage using the source > pathway > receptor model. NOTE: Groundwater is both a pathway and a receptor.

The site and activities will only cause a risk to the environment or people if you have all three parts of the pollutant linkage present i.e. a source, a pathway and a receptor. You should put in place measures to prevent or minimise or mitigate the effects of any risks and thereby break the pollutant linkages between these three. By doing this, you can identify how to prevent or reduce the likelihood of pollution and reduce the impact of any risks that may occur. It is important that you fully understand the local drainage network as pollution is often caused by mistaking a surface water drain for a foul/combined sewer. Contact your local water company for advice on this.

If you cause pollution, you will be responsible for the clean-up cost. This can be expensive and time consuming particularly if groundwater has become contaminated. There may be additional costs associated with recovering the cost for the environmental regulator's response (in line with the Polluter Pays Principle), you may receive fines through the criminal courts or civil claims, and you may experience a reputational cost i.e. loss of future work.

Following this Guidance for Pollution Prevention will help you reduce the likelihood of an incident. However, if one does occur contact the environmental regulator immediately on the relevant Incident Hotline number. A rapid response to incidents will help to minimise the environmental impact and could reduce the overall costs.

For more information refer to **Section 5**.

Section 2: Disposing of domestic used oil (from households)

2.1 Engine oil

Used oils such as engine and gearbox oil from vehicle or machine maintenance may be either mineral or synthetic oils. Householders can take these oils to an oil bank for recycling.

Oil banks can be found at most civic amenity sites. For the location of your nearest oil bank, contact the Oil Bank line on 03708 506506 or visit <http://www.oilbankline.org.uk/> and use the postcode search.

Alternatively, contact your local authority recycling officer who should be able to tell you. Do not mix used oil with other substances such as white spirit, paint or solvents, as this makes recycling extremely difficult.

2.2 Used cooking oils and fats

Used household cooking oils and fats can be recovered in local authority food waste collections or disposed of in the general household waste. Allow oils and fats to cool before separating them for collection.

Some civic amenity sites have facilities for the collection of vegetable oil. Contact your local authority recycling officer for details.

If there is no food waste collection in your area and your only option is to dispose of fats and oils with general household waste, they can be soaked into normal household rubbish or put into rigid plastic containers.

Don't:

- pour used cooking oil down the sink. This will solidify and cause blockages in the sewer system.
- put used cooking oil into ordinary oil recycling banks, as these are for engine oils only, and this makes the entire contents of the oil bank non-recyclable.

Section 3: Disposing of commercial and industrial used oil

Used mineral oil from commercial and industrial sources will be classified as hazardous/special waste. It must be managed in accordance with the relevant regulations which impose legal requirements for its movement, recovery and disposal. This involves:

- Accurately describing your waste, including any hazardous properties
- Safe and secure storage of waste
- Segregation of hazardous/special waste
- The use of a registered waste carrier to remove waste from your site – see Reference 10 for how to search your relevant Environmental Regulator's public register. You should also know where the carrier takes your waste for onward management.
- The use of consignment notes for hazardous/special waste
- Keeping records – everyone involved in the transfer must keep copies of Hazardous Waste Consignment Notes for a minimum of three years. (1 year only for Carriers in **Wales**)

See Reference 2: Hazardous/special waste regulations and Reference 3: Guidance on the Hazardous/special waste regulations

Seek advice from specialist contractors, or from your local environmental regulator, on the management of oil waste and wastes containing oils. For **Scotland** and **Northern Ireland**, visit the NetRegs website (www.netregs.org.uk).

3.1 Industrial oil

Used oil is a useful substance that can be recycled and reused or recovered and used as a fuel to save resources; it should be treated as such. Quantities of used oil such as hydraulic fluid or lubricants from lorries, buses or mechanical plant should be stored securely to await collection by a registered waste carrier.

There are specialist companies that will collect used cutting oils, and then treat and recover the oil.

Emulsified cutting oils are highly polluting in water and great care should be taken in their disposal; contact a specialist contractor for advice.

3.2 Vegetable oil

Cooking oils from commercial users, such as caterers and fish and chip shops, must not be disposed of with the general waste stream. The waste oils are not hazardous/special waste but are subject to the Duty of Care. These waste oils can be collected by specialist contractors and recovered by manufacturers of biofuels.

There are a number of businesses that will collect used cooking oil, and some suppliers of cooking oil now collect used oil when they deliver fresh supplies. Contact your supplier or waste contractor to find out about cooking oil collection in your area.

Used vegetable oil must not be disposed of to the surface water drain and may not be discharged to the foul sewer without the prior approval of the sewer provider.

3.3 Garages and workshops

Sites such as garages can generate large quantities of used oil. This oil must be collected by a registered waste carrier. For information on the storage of waste oil see **Section 4** of this guideline.

3.4 Transformers

Electrical transformers may use specialist oil. When spent, used transformer oil is always a hazardous/special waste.

Older transformers may contain polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), a harmful toxin that persists in the environment. Most old equipment should have been decontaminated and should contain less than 50 ppm of PCBs. It should be labelled clearly to indicate that this has been done. If PCBs are present at a concentration at or above 50ppm, seek advice on the disposal of the transformer oil from specialist waste contractors.

Section 4: Storing waste oil and associated pipework

In all cases, you must take care to avoid spillage when transferring waste oil to storage facilities. Any spills should be dealt with using absorbent materials. The environmental regulators recommend that you install waste oil tanks and pipework above ground whenever possible. This enables regular maintenance checks to be carried out more easily and leaks to be identified earlier.

4.1 Above ground storage

The above ground storage of oils in containers over 200 litres is covered by Oil Storage Regulations which include the storage of waste synthetic and vegetable oils. All storage containers should be strong containers that will not leak or burst in ordinary use. (This is a legal requirement in **Scotland** for containers with a capacity less than 200 litres and should be seen as good practice elsewhere)

All oil storage tanks must have secondary containment, either with the primary tank enclosed in a second outer tank (integrally bunded) or in the form of an impermeable bund surrounding the tank. The tank must be strong enough not to leak in ordinary use and located away from any surface water drains. The regulations require that attention is paid to the construction and condition of the tank, the siting of tanks, the capacity of secondary containment, the ancillary pipework and safety devices.

Guidelines for above ground oil storage tanks are given in Reference 4: GPP2: Above ground Oil storage, and guidelines for oil stored in drums or intermediate bulk containers (IBCs) in Reference 5: GPP26.

See also Reference 11: Guidance on the Oil Storage Regulations

4.2 On site storage of waste oils

Northern Ireland

A Paragraph 12 waste exemption allows for the storage of waste oils if the container does not exceed 3 cubic metres and provision must be made to prevent oil escaping into the ground or a drain.

Scotland

A Paragraph 18 waste exemption allows for the storage of waste oils if the container does not exceed 3 cubic metres and provision must be made to prevent oil escaping into the ground or a drain.

Wales

Storage of waste mineral oils, greater than 200 litres but less than 3000 litres) in Wales is covered by an S1 exemption under the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016. This allows waste oil to be appropriately stored without a permit, prior to removal for recycling, if the container does not exceed 3 cubic metres and other controls to prevent pollution or harm to the environment and human health are met. Although no permit is required in these circumstances, it does not absolve from the need to meet the requirements of the 2016 Oil storage Regulations for **Wales**.

For further information see Reference 6: Waste Exemptions.

Regardless of whether they are covered by the legislation described above, **all oil storage facilities must be sited on an impervious base within an oil-tight secondary containment system such as a bund.**

It is possible to buy integrally banded oil storage tanks, which have an inner tank situated inside a secondary tank. This will have adequate capacity to contain any oil that leaks from the inner tank.

If a single skinned tank is used then it must be situated inside a constructed bund, made of a material that is impermeable to the stored oil.

The bund walls should be constructed without a damp-proof course or drainage outlet from the bund itself. As a minimum, the bund should be capable of containing 110% of the volume of the oil container. Where more than one container is stored, the bund capacity should be at least 110% of the largest tank or 25% of the total storage capacity, whichever is the greater.

Fill pipes, funnels, draw pipes and sight gauges must be enclosed within the secondary containment system, and any tank vent pipe should be directed downwards into it.

See Reference 4: GPP2: Above ground Oil storage and Oil Storage Regulations specific to your area.

4.3 Disposal of waste from banded areas

Where oil is stored within a banded area, rainwater and oil residues can build up. This build-up reduces the storage capacity of the bund and you should remove it regularly by bailing from the sump or using a manually operated pump. This residue is likely to be contaminated with oil and, as such, may be hazardous/special waste. Hazardous/special waste must be segregated from other waste, you must use a consignment note and you must have it transported by a registered waste carrier to a site that is authorised to deal with it. In the long term, it may be more cost-effective to construct a roof over the tank and secondary containment. Consider fire risk, and health and safety for maintenance and the delivery driver before fitting a roof.

Water contaminated with oil, such as that found in an oil separator or inside a bund wall, may be hazardous/special waste and, unless the concentration of oil is very low, will need to be treated in accordance with Hazardous/Special Waste controls. See WM3 in Reference 3 for guidance on the assessment, classification and correct codes for such wastes. This type of waste will need to be dealt with by a specialised contractor and will need to be accompanied by a consignment note.

4.4 Underground tanks and pipe

The storage of used oils below ground poses a potential threat to groundwater. All new tanks must be double skinned with a suitable leak detection device. **Underground pipework must be protected against corrosion and from physical damage** like that caused by excessive surface loading, ground movement or ground disturbance. **If mechanical joints have to be used, they must be readily accessible for inspection under a hatch or cover.**

You must have adequate facilities for detecting leaks from underground pipework. If you use a continuous leak detection device, it should be maintained and tested regularly (in Scotland at least every 5 years). Keep a record of the test results and any maintenance work completed.

If you don't have a continuous leak detection system you must test:

- **pipework before use**
- **pipework with mechanical joints every five years**
- **all other pipe work at least every ten years.**

These are minimum requirements and it's good practice to do this more frequently.

If you are planning to store waste oil in underground tanks, it is essential that you take into account the local environmental risks when selecting your site and designing your storage. These risks could affect the engineering requirements of the site. Note that, in accordance with its approach to groundwater protection, the underground storage of hazardous waste is strongly discouraged in **Wales** and Natural Resources Wales would object in certain circumstances.

Factors to consider when planning or using an underground storage tank include the

- age and storage capacity of any facility
- sensitivity of groundwater and the local Regulator's requirements
- proximity of watercourses, public and private abstraction points and environmentally sensitive areas (e.g. sites of special scientific interest).

Further information about local environmental factors and applicable guidance is available from your environmental regulator.

Further information on storage and leak detection systems is given in Reference 7: GPP27 Installation, decommissioning and removal of underground storage tanks and in Reference 8: GPP7: Refuelling facilities. In **Wales** and **Scotland** you should also be familiar with the code of practice for underground storage tanks See Reference 7: Codes of practice for underground storage tanks.

Section 5: Incident response

Incident Hotline Numbers:

In **Scotland, Northern Ireland and England** call:

0800 80 70 60

(24 hour service)

In **Wales** call:

0300 065 3000

(24 hour service; Press 1 for Welsh, 2 for English)

5.1 Immediate response

You should immediately report any environmental incidents by calling the Incident Hotline for your country.

Incidents can include spillages (e.g. from oils and chemicals), contaminated surface water run-off, flooding, riverbed disturbance, damage to underground services, damage to habitats and poor waste disposal and storage. If in doubt, report it.

You should produce an Pollution Incident Response Plan as part of the environmental impact management of your work, see Reference 9, GPP21. Include the following:

- site risks
- list of key external and internal contacts (include your environmental regulator, Local Authority, Fire Service)
- reporting procedures
- site plan including drainage and location of storage/refuelling areas
- list of stored materials
- details of local environmental sensitivities e.g. abstractors, high amenity areas and fish farms
- location of spill equipment
- procedures for spill containment and remediation

Train your staff and contractors in the use of spill equipment and how to manage and dispose of waste materials legally.

If you are using oils and chemicals in close proximity to the water environment, store a suitable spill kit or absorbent materials nearby. Provide appropriate temporary storage for any oils and chemicals. Contain all spillages using absorbents such as sand, soil or commercially available booms or pads and notify the environmental regulator immediately, using the Incident Hotline numbers above.

Used oil absorbents

Where absorbents, (e.g. sand, oil pads or booms) have been used to absorb a leak or contain a spill, the contaminated waste absorbent is likely to be classified as hazardous/special waste. You must dispose of these wastes, or have a waste contractor dispose of them, at a suitably authorised waste management facility.

Additional information

The Oil Care Campaign website has information on all aspects of storing oil, including industrial and commercial oil storage, domestic heating tanks, boats, agriculture and waste oil. It also has information on spill prevention and you can order useful tank stickers.

Oil Care Campaign contact details:

www.oilcare.org.uk

References

Reference 1 Duty of Care Codes of Practice

Northern Ireland: Duty of Care Code of Practice <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/wastemanagement-duty-care-code-practice>

Scotland: Duty of Care Code of Practice <http://www.gov.scot/resource/0040/00404095.pdf>

Wales: Duty of Care code of Practice <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/waste-duty-of-carecode-of-practice>

Reference 2 Hazardous and Special Waste Regulations

Hazardous Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005 (as amended)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2005/300/contents/made>

(Scotland) Special Waste Regulations 1996 (as amended)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1996/972/contents/made>

Hazardous Waste (Wales) Regulations 2005 (as amended)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2005/1806/contents/made>

Reference 3 Guidance on Hazardous/Special Waste

WM3:

Scotland - SEPA: A guide to consigning Special Waste

http://www.sepa.org.uk/media/36660/consigning_special_waste.pdf

Northern Ireland – DAERA: A guide to consigning Hazardous Waste <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/waste-guidance-consigning-hazardous-waste-2015.pdf>

Wales - Natural Resources Wales: Do I need to notify my premises? Hazardous waste guidance <https://naturalresources.wales/media/1206/do-i-need-to-notify-my-premises-a-guide-to-the-hazardouswaste-regulations.pdf>

In Scotland and Northern Ireland also refer to NetRegs: Hazardous/Special Waste

<http://www.netregs.org.uk/environmental-topics/waste/hazardous-special-waste/>

Reference 4 GPP2: Above ground oil storage tanks.

<http://www.netregs.org.uk/environmental-topics/pollution-prevention-guidelines-ppgs-and-replacement-series/guidance-for-pollution-prevention-gpps-full-list/>

Reference 5 GPP26: Storage and handling of drums and intermediate bulk containers

<http://www.netregs.org.uk/environmental-topics/pollution-prevention-guidelines-ppgs-and-replacementseries/guidance-for-pollution-prevention-gpps-full-list/>

Reference 6 Exemptions for Storing Waste Oil

Northern Ireland: Paragraph 12 exemption <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/paragraph-12-simpleexemption-application-form>

Scotland: Paragraph 18 Exemption <http://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/waste/activities-exempt-fromwaste-management-licensing/>

Wales: S1 Exemption under EPR <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/waste-exemptions-storing-waste>

Reference 7 GPP 27: Installation, decommissioning and removal of underground storage tanks

<http://www.netregs.org.uk/environmental-topics/pollution-prevention-guidelines-ppgs-and-replacementseries/guidance-for-pollution-prevention-gpps-full-list/>

Scotland - SEPA: Code of practice: Underground storage for liquid hydrocarbons
http://www.netregs.org.uk/PDF/SEPA%20s%20code_of_practice_Underground%20storagefor_l_h.pdf

Wales – Prevent groundwater pollution from underground storage tanks
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prevent-groundwater-pollution-from-underground-fuel-storage-tanks>

Reference 8 GPP 7 Refuelling facilities <http://www.netregs.org.uk/environmental-topics/pollutionprevention-guidelines-ppgs-and-replacement-series/guidance-for-pollution-prevention-gpps-full-list/>

Reference 9 GPP21 Pollution incident response planning
<http://www.netregs.org.uk/environmental-topics/pollution-prevention-guidelines-ppgs-and-replacement-series/guidance-for-pollution-prevention-gpps-full-list/>

In Scotland and Northern Ireland also refer to NetRegs: Pollution Incident Response Planning
<http://www.netregs.org.uk/environmental-topics/emergency-response/pollution-incident-responseplanning/>

Reference 10 Public registers of licenced waste sites
Northern Ireland – DAERA – Public register of licensed waste sites.
<https://www.daerani.gov.uk/topics/waste/public-registers>

Scotland – SEPA – Waste sites and capacity.
<https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/waste/wastedata/waste-data-reporting/waste-site-information/waste-sites-and-capacity-excel/>

Natural Resources Wales' Public Register: <https://naturalresources.wales/permits-and-permissions/check-for-a-permit-licence-or-exemption/?lang=en>**Reference 11** Guidance on the Oil Storage Regulations

Northern Ireland and Scotland: NetRegs - Oil Storage regulations
<http://www.netregs.org.uk/environmental-topics/materials-fuels-and-equipment/oil-storage/>

Wales: Oil Storage Standards <https://gov.wales/oil-storage-regulations>

Further information

For information about environmental compliance, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit www.netregs.org.uk.

You can view guidance on environmental regulations online at www.netregs.org.uk (for businesses in Scotland and Northern Ireland) and at <http://naturalresources.Wales> (for businesses in Wales).

This guidance is issued by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

This document is available at www.netregs.org.uk/environmental-topics/pollution-preventionguidelines-ppgs-and-replacement-series/.

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Useful contacts

Incident/Pollution hotline: Northern Ireland, Scotland and England

0800 80 70 60 (24-hour service)

Emergency hotline - Wales

0300 065 3000 (24-hour service; press 1 for Welsh, 2 for English)

Floodline – Wales, Scotland and England

0845 988 1188

Flooding incident line - Northern Ireland

0300 200 0100

Natural Resources Wales

Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

www.naturalresourcesWales.gov.uk

www.sepa.org.uk

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

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