



Minnesota
Pollution
Control
Agency

Managing Scrap Metal, Catalytic Converters & Wheel Weights

Hazardous Waste Fact Sheet #4.27 October 1998

This fact sheet discusses management of scrap materials commonly found in the automotive repair and salvage industries.

Environmental Concerns

Scrap metal means bits and pieces of metal parts (e.g., rods, bolts, wheel weights) or metal pieces that may be combined together with bolts or solder (e.g., radiators, scrap automobiles) which when worn or unneeded, can be recycled. Some scrap parts contain lead — a well-known toxic substance and potential pollutant. Scrap catalytic converters contain platinum — a valuable, recyclable metal. Managing scrap safely will prevent contamination at your site.

Lead Scrap

Lead wheel (tire) weights and battery cable ends are common sources of lead. Lead is also found in radiators, heater cores, steering columns, soldered parts (such as circuit boards) and electronic components.

Before removing parts such as radiators or heater cores, drain fluids carefully to prevent spills and manage them appropriately. If you need to use a cutting torch, wear respiratory protection, such as a respirator with appropriate filters, to reduce the risk of breathing airborne lead that may be released by heating lead scrap.

TIP: To avoid generating lead fumes, use a reciprocating saw rather than a cutting torch to remove lead portions from scrap parts.

Store scrap items containing lead in a covered container that is capable of handling the excessive weight of the lead. Marking the container "Lead Scrap" will help ensure non-lead scrap is not mixed with it. Large scrap items, such as radiators that cannot be stored in a covered container, should be stored in such a way that will prevent contact with rain, snow and storm water. Battery cable ends can be left attached to the battery and recycled along with the battery. Recycle lead parts with a metals or battery recycler.

NOTE: After working with lead scrap, always wash well before eating or smoking to avoid ingesting lead.

Catalytic Converters

Store waste catalytic converters in a marked container to prevent mixing with other scrap. Recycle catalytic converters with a catalytic converter collection center — several are listed on hazardous waste fact sheet #6.07, *Catalytic Converter Collection Centers*.

Cores

Core parts, such as alternators, master brake cylinders, starters and brake pads should be returned to a parts supplier for rebuilding. Before returning brake cylinders or any other part containing fluid, be sure to drain it well.





Other Scrap

Other scrap, such as copper wire, exhaust pipes, **empty** fuel tanks and miscellaneous clamps and fittings, can be collected in a containment area suitable to your business. (NOTE: Burning insulation off copper wire is prohibited by open burning laws.)

Remember, good housekeeping practices send a positive message about your business. Manage scrap in a way that will neither detract from that message nor adversely impact the environment.

Disposal

Some shops may generate enough scrap metal to make it worthwhile to work directly with a scrap hauler. (Look in your local yellow pages for one near you.) Others may generate only small amounts of scrap and find their needs better met by taking their scrap to a local salvage business that will send it off for recycling.

Record Keeping

Keep copies on site of receipts and waste-tracking invoices for at least 3 years from the date of shipment.

For More Information

Your metropolitan county and the MPCA have staff available to answer your questions about hazardous waste management in Minnesota. For more specific information, contact your hazardous waste assistance provider listed below.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Toll free(800) 657-3864
Brainerd(218) 828-2492
Detroit Lakes(218) 847-1519
Duluth(218) 723-4660
Marshall(507) 537-7146
Rochester(507) 285-7343
St. Paul.....(651) 297-8363

MPCA Web Address:

[<http://www.pca.state.mn.us>]

Metro County Hazardous Waste Offices

Anoka County(612) 421-7093
Carver County(612) 361-1800
Dakota County(612) 891-7011
Hennepin County(612) 348-8100
Ramsey County.....(651) 773-4466
Scott County(612) 496-8177
Washington County ...(651) 430-6655