

Aqueous-Based Parts Washers

Many businesses, such as vehicle or firearm repair shops, manufacturers and printers, use parts washers that clean parts or equipment by spraying them with a fluid. Some parts washers use solvent-based cleaning fluids, such as mineral spirits, 'citrus solvent', or proprietary mixtures. Others, known as aqueous-based parts washers, use water-based cleaning fluids, such as water, water with detergents, or steam. This fact sheet will discuss the hazardous waste requirements of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) for aqueous-based parts washers. For solvent-based parts washers, see MPCA fact sheet #w-hw4-43, Solvent-based Parts Washers, at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/w-hw4-43.pdf>.

Generators located in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area counties of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington (Metro Counties) may be subject to more strict local requirements of their Metro County. Contact your Metro County; see [More information](#) on page 2.

Are my parts washer wastes hazardous?

Parts washer fluid is considered a waste when you can no longer use it to clean parts or when you decide to dispose of it. Aqueous parts washer fluid, though non-toxic when an unused product, may pick up sufficient contaminants such as fuel and oil breakdown wastes, heavy metals, or ignitable fuel components during use to become a hazardous waste.

You must assume your used aqueous parts washer fluid and bottom sludge are hazardous waste unless you evaluate them as non-hazardous. See MPCA fact sheet #w-hw1-01, Evaluate Waste, at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/w-hw1-01.pdf>.

In addition, note that many brake, carburetor, and gasket cleaners contain toxic chlorinated solvents. If sprayed over or allowed to drip into your aqueous parts washer, chlorinated solvents will cause your used parts washer fluid and sludge to become chlorinated hazardous wastes and render them ineligible for mixing into used oil for disposal. Chlorinated ingredients are often identifiable from the word root 'chlor' in one or more of the ingredients on the product label or Safety Data Sheet (SDS).

How may I accumulate and dispose of aqueous parts washer wastes?

Parts washer fluid

You may dispose of aqueous parts washer fluid by:

- Discharging it to a sanitary sewer whether or not it is hazardous waste, if you first notify the sewage treatment plant operator of your intended discharge and comply with any limits, conditions, or prohibitions they direct. If you have not evaluated your used aqueous parts washer fluid as non-hazardous, report the discharged volume to the MPCA or your Metro County. Do not discharge aqueous parts washer fluid to a septic system or pour it on the ground.
- Contracting with a hazardous waste disposal vendor to pick up your used aqueous parts washer fluid.
- If your site is a Very Small Quantity Generator (VSQG), transporting it yourself to a VSQG Collection Program. See MPCA fact sheet #w-hw2-51, Very Small Quantity Generator Collection Programs, at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/w-hw2-51.pdf>.

You may evaporate your used aqueous parts washer fluid to reduce its volume before disposal if you first request and receive approval from the MPCA or your Metro County.

For more information on hazardous waste disposal options, see MPCA fact sheet #w-hw1-06, Treat or Dispose of Hazardous Waste, at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/w-hw1-06.pdf>.

Skimmed oils

You may manage oils skimmed from your aqueous parts washer with your used oil. Do not count skimmed oils towards your hazardous waste generator size. See MPCA fact sheet #w-hw4-30, Used Oil and Related Wastes, at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/w-hw4-30.pdf>.

Bottom sludges

You may contract with a hazardous waste disposal vendor to pick up your aqueous parts washer bottom sludge.

If your site is a VSQG, you may also:

- Mix the bottom sludge into your used oil for disposal. Count unevaluated and hazardous waste sludge mixed into your used oil towards your hazardous waste generator size and report it to the MPCA or Metro County. See MPCA fact sheet #w-hw4-30, Used Oil and Related Wastes, at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/w-hw4-30.pdf>.
- Transport your bottom sludge yourself to a VSQG Collection Program. See MPCA fact sheet #w-hw2-51, Very Small Quantity Generator Collection Programs, at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/w-hw2-51.pdf>.

Filters

You may manage disposable filters from your aqueous parts washer with your used oil filters. Do not count these filters towards your hazardous waste generator size. See MPCA fact sheet #w-hw4-30, Used Oil and Related Wastes, at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/w-hw4-30.pdf>.

Launderable filters or sorbent pads may be washed and reused. No manifest is needed for shipments of launderable sorbents to a commercial laundry. See MPCA fact sheet #w-hw4-61, Managing Sorbents: Towels, Wipes, and Rags, at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/w-hw4-61.pdf>.

More information

Guidance and requirements in this fact sheet were compiled from Minnesota Rules, Chapter 7045. To review Minnesota Statutes and Rules, visit the Office of the Revisor of Statutes at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/pubs>.

Contact your Metro County or the MPCA with questions. The MPCA's Small Business Environmental Assistance Program can provide free, confidential regulatory compliance assistance. The Minnesota Technical Assistance Program (MnTAP) can help you reduce your waste generation and risk. Report all hazardous waste incidents such as spills to the Minnesota Duty Officer immediately.

Metro County Hazardous Waste Offices

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| Anoka | 763-422-7093 |
| | https://www.anokacounty.us/ |
| Carver | 952-361-1800 |
| | http://www.co.carver.mn.us/ |
| Dakota | 952-891-7557 |
| | https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/ |
| Hennepin | 612-348-3777 |
| | http://www.hennepin.us/ |
| Ramsey | 651-266-1199 |
| | https://www.ramseycounty.us/ |
| Scott | 952-496-8177 |
| | http://www.scottcountymn.gov/ |
| Washington | 651-430-6655 |
| | https://www.co.washington.mn.us/ |

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

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| Toll free (all offices) | 1-800-657-3864 |
| All offices | 651-296-6300 |
| | https://www.pca.state.mn.us/ |

Minnesota Duty Officer

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| Toll free | 1-800-422-0798 |
| Metro | 651-649-5451 |

Small Business Environmental Assistance Program

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| Toll free | 1-800-657-3938 |
| Metro | 651-282-6143 |
| | https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sbeap/ |

Minnesota Technical Assistance Program

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| Toll free | 1-800-247-0015 |
| Metro | 612-624-1300 |
| | http://www.mntap.umn.edu |