

Alternatives to Used Oil for Dust Suppression

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This fact sheet is intended for entities that apply dust suppressants to roads.

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Environmental Concerns

When applied to roads, used oil can seep into the ground water, run off into surface waters, or spread in the air with dust particles. Once into ground or surface waters, even small amounts of used oil can contaminate large quantities of drinking water.

Studies conducted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency show that more than half of the used oil applied to roads for dust suppression enters the environment through runoff or with blowing dust.

Used oil reduces the amount of oxygen in water, damaging fish and other aquatic life. In addition, used oil often contains other contaminants such as benzene (a known cancer-causing agent in humans), chlorinated solvents, lead and other toxic metals. People exposed to these contaminants may experience various health effects. These contaminants may also be toxic to fish and vegetation.

Applying used oil to roads as a dust suppressant is prohibited by law.

Alternatives

Effective alternatives to the use of used oil as a dust suppressant include:

- watering the road periodically;
- reducing the speed limit or the speed of your vehicle;
- installing speed bumps, if practical; and
- paving the road, if practical.

If none of these alternatives are practical, you may wish to consider applying one of the following stabilization agents to the road:

- calcium chloride;
- sodium chloride;
- mixture of calcium chloride and sodium chloride;
- magnesium chloride; or,
- petroleum resin/emulsion products.

To maximize the effectiveness of these stabilization agents:

- Crown and shape the road surface to final grade to assure good drainage.
- Do not over apply the agents. Follow the application instructions for the product. *In Minnesota, only one or two treatments per year are generally necessary.*
- Pre-wet the road with water (except when using petroleum agents) to assist products in penetrating the road surface.
- Do not apply stabilization agents within 36 hours prior to heavy rain or wind to ensure product penetration into the road surface and to decrease the chance that it is washed or blown away.
- Store unused agents indoors in a leak-proof container to preserve them for future use.



More Information

Your metropolitan county and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency have staff available to answer waste management questions. For more information, contact your metropolitan county hazardous waste office or the MPCA office closest to your county.

Metro County Hazardous Waste Offices

Anoka County	(763) 422-7093
Carver County	(952) 361-1800
Dakota County	(952) 891-7020
Hennepin County	(612) 348-8100
Ramsey County	(651) 773-4466
Scott County	(952) 496-8177
Washington County	(651) 430-6655

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) 297-2274
Willmar	(320) 214-3786

Web Site <http://www.pca.state.mn.us>