

California's Used Oil Recycling Program

What Is the Law?

Since 1987 it has been illegal to dispose of used oil in sewers, drainage systems, surface or ground waters, water courses, or marine waters, by domestic incineration, or onto the land or in the trash.

In 1991 the California State Legislature passed the Oil Recycling Enhancement Act to address the significant threat to California's environment from illegally dumped used oil. The California Integrated Waste Management Board was charged with overseeing the implementation of the act. The mission of the Board's Used Oil Recycling Program is to discourage the illegal disposal of used oil and promote used oil recycling statewide.

What Are the Hazards of Used Oil?

Used oil can contain such contaminants as lead, magnesium, copper, zinc, chromium, arsenic, chlorides, cadmium, and chlorinated compounds. Oil poured down drains or onto the ground can work its way into our ground and surface waters and cause serious pollution. One gallon of used oil can foul a million gallons of drinking water. Federal reports indicate that used motor oil accounts for more than 40 percent of the total oil pollution of our nation's harbors and waterways.

Can Used Oil Be Recycled?

Yes, used oil is very recyclable. Used oil can be re-refined or processed into fuel oil. Unfortunately, not enough is being recycled. In fiscal year 2000/01, 160 million gallons of lubricating oil were sold in California. Approximately 40 percent—or 64 million gallons—leaked out of engines or was burned. Yet, of the remaining 96 million gallons, just 83 million gallons were recycled, leaving approximately 13 million gallons unaccounted for and possibly improperly disposed of down storm drains, into lakes or streams, or thrown in the garbage.

What Is California Doing?

As a result of the act, the Board has certified over 2,700 used oil collection centers that will take used oil from the public and even pay a 16-cent-per-gallon recycling incentive. The Board also offers grants to local governments for used oil collection and education programs. Local participation in these grant programs serves over 99 percent of California's citizens. The Board works with other State agencies, such as the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), to deliver used oil recycling messages. For instance, DMV includes the Board's recycling message and the California Environmental Protection Agency's toll-free hotline number (1-800-CLEANUP) on envelopes mailed for registration renewal.

How Can You Help?

You can participate in oil recycling by following these tips:

- Drain your used oil into a clean container.
- Do not mix any other materials, including water, with used oil.
- Take your used oil to a household hazardous waste collection facility or a used oil collection site.

To find the Certified Used Oil Collection Center nearest you:

Call 1-800-CLEANUP

or

Go on line at

www.1800cleanup.org/

For more information about California's Used Oil Recycling Program, call (916) 341-6445



RECYCLE
USED OIL