



Potential Environmental Impacts

Contaminated rags (also called wipes, wipers, and shop towels) and absorbents (such as mats, socks, and loose material such as Speedi-dry™) that are improperly managed may pose fire, health and environmental risks. Minimizing contamination of rags and absorbents reduces health risks to workers and emissions of volatile organic compounds to the air, decreases liability risks, and saves money by minimizing solvent use.

Legal Requirements

- ◆ How used rags and absorbents are managed depends on what they are contaminated with. [40 CFR 279 and RCSA Section 22a-449(c)-119; 40 CFR 261 and RCSA Section 22a-449(c)-101; CGS Section 22a-454]

If the used rag or absorbent is:

- Dripping with used oil, manage as used oil. (See Used Oil Fact Sheet.)
 - Contaminated with used oil, but not dripping, perform a hazardous waste determination. If not hazardous, manage as Connecticut-regulated waste. If hazardous, manage as hazardous waste. (See Appendix A for more information.)
 - Contaminated with paints or solvents, or other hazardous materials, manage as hazardous waste. (See Appendix A.)
 - Contaminated with non-hazardous materials such as waxes, polishing compounds, etc., dispose in regular trash if only a small number are generated (e.g., 1 or 2 rags per dumpster). If significant amounts of these rags or other absorbents are generated, however, they must be segregated and managed as Connecticut-Regulated waste. (See Appendix A.)
 - Contaminated with other material (such as mild cleaners or soaps), dispose of in regular trash.
- ◆ If you lease rags and have them laundered at an industrial rag laundry, and they are contaminated with hazardous waste, you must manage them as hazardous waste until they are picked up for laundering. However, they do not require a hazardous waste manifest.
 - ◆ If you choose to launder your own rags, you will need a wastewater discharge permit from DEEP, which authorizes you to discharge effluent to the sanitary sewer. Contact DEEP's Water Permitting Enforcement Division at 860-424-3025 for more information. [CGS Section 22a-430]

Legal References

- Identification And Listing Of Hazardous Waste - [40 CFR 261](#)
- Standards for the Management of Used Oil - [40 CFR 279](#)

- Permit for a new discharge - [CGS Section 22a-430](#)
- Management of rags and absorbents - [CGS Section 22a-454](#)
- Standards for the Management of Used Oil - [RCSA Section 22a-449\(c\)-119](#)
- Identification and Listing of Hazardous Waste - [RCSA Section 22a-449\(c\)-101](#)

Best Management Practices

- ★ Reduce the amount of solvent used in cleaning through improved work practices. Use solvents only when absolutely necessary. Use non-VOC cleaners.
- ★ Keep oily rags or absorbents separate from those that have been contaminated with hazardous materials such as solvents.
- ★ Store ignitable rags in NFPA- approved (National Fire Prevention Association), labeled containers until they are picked up for laundering or disposal.
- ★ Contract with a permitted industrial laundry service that delivers clean cloth rags and will pick up the soiled rags on a regular basis. The laundry service may require you to limit the solvent and other chemical content of the soiled rags because of the limits on their permit to discharge wastewater into the sanitary sewer.
- ★ All laundries in Connecticut that handle industrial rags must have a wastewater discharge permit from DEEP. Have your laundry service certify that they hold the appropriate permits and they are in compliance with the permit conditions. For a list of facilities that have valid discharge permits and their compliance status with the permit conditions, call DEEP's Water Permitting Enforcement Division at 860-424-3025.
- ★ Remove excess solvent from rags by wringing or pressing excess into coverable container, or store rags in a double-bottomed drum that allows the solvent to drip where it can be collected and recycled or managed appropriately.



Proper storage of used rags

Pollution Prevention Checklist

- ✓ Do you remove excess solvent from rags before having them laundered?



Did You Know?

Some disposable wipes are wringable and can be reused as many as 17 times.

[2014 Pit Stops Fact Sheets](#). Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Office of Pollution Prevention, 860-424-3297. Updated April 2014 www.ct.gov/deep/pitstops