

EnviroWire

Environmental Training



Disposal of Solvent-Contaminated Wipes Rule, 40 CFR 260

On July 31, 2013 the rule that governs the disposal of solvent-contaminated wipes was finalized to exempt spent solvent-contaminated wipes from hazardous waste regulations if the waste meets certain criteria.

Effective January 31, 2014, spent shop rags and paper towels used with parts cleaning solvent are no longer subject to a hazardous waste regulation if managed appropriately (and not otherwise governed by state or local rules).

The standard streamlines the handling of spent wipes.

To implement the exemption criteria, an automotive shop using either launderable shop rags or disposable towels must assure that the spent wipes are stored in properly labeled, leak-proof containers until disposal to the laundry facility or the landfill via trash collection, respectively.

The container can be any closed container labeled “**Excluded Solvent-Contaminated Wipes**” and does NOT have to be sealed, only closed, during accumulation.

Upon disposal the container or bag must be sealed for transport (any free liquid solvent found in the container at time of disposal must be managed as hazardous waste).

The good news is that a garbage bag can be tied-off and considered a sealed container and placed in the regular municipal trash for collection, as long as the state or local authority does not ban such waste. A label printed from a desktop printer and affixed to the container or bag will suffice.

The bad news is that the spent wipes must be segregated from other wastes until such time as sent for laundering or disposal. The frequency at which the laundry and/or trash is picked up must also be well-documented to prove that the spent wipes have been disposed within 180 days of generation.



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In This Issue

- ◆ Solvent Contaminated Wipes Rule
- ◆ Training

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Management Options for Solvent Contaminated Rags



The updated rule and subsequent exclusion has been a long time coming with inquiry and studies dating back to 1994. The rule is based on a thorough course of investigation that found spent solvent-contaminated wipes do not pose a risk of pollution when handled in this manner. A particular solvent, trichloroethylene, not generally used in automotive work is not included in the exemption.

For more information on this rulemaking, go to: <https://www.epa.gov/hwgenerators/final-rule-2013-conditional-exclusions-solid-waste-and-hazardous-waste-solvent>

Although no special containers are required by the rule, it is reasonable to assume that some risk may be created when solvent contaminated rags or towels are accumulated. A fire safe can is a practical solution for the storage bin. The can may be lined with a regular trash bag for disposable wipes and with a laundry bag for launderable wipes. The bags must be labeled **EXCLUDED SOLVENT CONTAMINATED WIPES**.

The bag must be sent to the municipal trash or laundry service **BEFORE** the date is six month old.



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Conduct Employee Training

Solvent-contaminated wipes must be segregated from other wastes and placed in the designated waste storage bin and properly labeled EXCLUDED SOLVENT CONTAMINATED WIPES. The waste storage is dated to ensure that these wipes are disposed or laundered with the six month limitation for wastes set by the EPA..

Even though the used wipes may be dry they will be managed under these special waste rules.

The proper label may be hand-written, printed on paper and affixed, printed on a sticker and affixed or special labels may be used.



The bag must be sent to the municipal trash or laundry service BEFORE the date is six months old.

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