

This guidance document is advisory in nature but is binding on an agency until amended by such agency. A guidance document does not include internal procedural documents that only affect the internal operations of the agency and does not impose additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties or include confidential information or rules and regulations made in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act. If you believe that this guidance document imposes additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties, you may request a review of the document.

05-182

Revised 03/2026

Best Management Tips for Automotive & Truck Repair Businesses

This guidance document has been produced by the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (DWEE) to help automotive businesses stay in compliance with hazardous waste regulations.

Spill Control and Notification

Report Spills: During business hours (8 am – 5 pm): DWEE (402) 471-2186
 After hours: Nebraska State Patrol (402) 471-4545

Report all spills to a waterway and any spills greater than 25 gallons. Immediately contain and clean up spills or leaks. Seal off floor drains to ensure that a spill or leak does not reach a storm drain, sanitary sewer, septic tank, or dry well.

Floors and Floor Drains

Areas where vehicles are stored or repaired should have an impervious surface with provisions for containment of any vehicle leaks. Vehicle wash bays must be completely bermed.

Floor drains in service bays and vehicle washing areas must be connected to a holding tank with a gravity discharge pipe, a sump that pumps to a holding tank, or to a municipal sanitary sewer. Obtain permission from the municipal wastewater treatment facility before allowing your floor cleaning waste to enter a sanitary sewer. Floor drains cannot be connected to a leach field or septic system if the drain is used for automotive fluids. Sludges from floor drains may be hazardous and a hazardous waste determination must be performed before disposal. See the DWEE Guidance Document titled “Sump, Pit, Trench, & Trap Wastes: Hazardous Waste Determinations” for more information.

Floor drains in wash bays should be connected to an oil/water separator that is not connected to service bays and that discharges to the municipal sanitary sewer. Oil/water separators cannot be used to collect spills or concentrated wastes. Oil/water separators and grit collection traps should be cleaned every 6 to 12 months.

Service bay floor drains that discharge to dry wells must be cleaned out with liquid and sediment samples being sent for hazardous waste testing. Contaminated dry wells should be removed with the contents disposed of according to Title 128.

Lifts and Pits

Service pits with earthen floors should be checked for contamination and cleaned up if any is found. All service pits should be completely surfaced with concrete and sealed. Hydraulic lifts should be regularly checked for leaks and above-ground lift systems should be used in place of in-ground systems when possible.

Work Areas

Keep work areas clean and check for leaks regularly. Where space permits, dedicate areas for specific operations to minimize cross contamination of waste. Each service bay should have a means to collect any waste generated. Satellite accumulation containers may be used for hazardous waste.

Stormwater Management

Uncovered vehicle storage areas may have a separate stormwater collection system with an oil/water separator that discharges to the municipal sanitary sewer or a holding tank. Some facilities may need a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for stormwater discharge associated with industrial activity.

Material and Waste Management

Waste must be stored indoors or under covered areas if stored outside. Ensure that lids fit properly and keep waste collection containers closed unless material is being added or removed. Keep documentation of all analytical testing results and waste profiles on-site.

Used batteries, mercury-containing items, light bulbs, and electronic items may be managed as universal waste. See the DWEE guidance document titled "Universal Waste Regulations" for more information. Large quantities of batteries should be stored in an isolated area with no floor drains. This area must be sealed with acid-resistant material and have a containment berm. Batteries stored on pallets should be covered and stored within an enclosed area that is protected from freezing temperatures. Batteries awaiting recycling may be stored in acid-resistant tubs. Never drain battery acid into a sewer or onto the ground.

Aerosol cans may be punctured, drained, and managed as scrap metal. For more information on aerosol can regulations, see the DWEE guidance document titled "Aerosol Can Waste." Dumpsters containing scrap metal must have the drain plug in place and should be covered. Dumpsters should be located on a concrete pad with a means to collect storm water caught in the dumpster.

Brake pads, shoes, and the dust from brakes may contain asbestos. Store asbestos waste separate from other waste in plastic bags placed into a sealed container with a label that clearly indicates that the contents contain asbestos. Contact the receiving landfill before disposal of any asbestos-containing material.

Antifreeze

Spent antifreeze must be stored in a closed container that clearly indicates that it contains spent or used antifreeze. Never mix antifreeze with any other waste such as used oil or waste solvents. Spent antifreeze must be analytically tested to determine if it possesses a characteristic of hazardous waste. Any spent filters and sludges produced during on-site recycling of antifreeze must have a hazardous waste determination performed. Never dispose of spent antifreeze on the ground or in a storm drain, septic tank, or dry well. For more information on antifreeze management, testing, and recycling, see the DWEE guidance document titled “Antifreeze Waste Considerations.”

Used Oil and Oil Filters

Collect used oil in containers that are clearly labeled with the words “Used Oil.” Never mix antifreeze, brake fluid, or solvents with used oil. Never pour used oil on the ground or in a storm drain, septic tank, or dry well.

Used oil filters that will be recycled must be fully drained of oil and crushed, dismantled, or punctured and hot-drained. Do not place oil filters in the trash unless they are properly drained. See the DWEE guidance document titled “Used Oil & Oil Filter Management” for more information on used oil and oil filters.

Shop Rags and Towels

Disposable wipes, rags, and towel without hazardous co-contaminants may dispose of these wipes as solid waste in a permitted municipal solid waste landfill. Any wipes, rags, and towels that have been contaminated with a hazardous material are a hazardous waste and must be managed as a hazardous waste. Used rags and towels that are sent to a laundry service to be cleaned and have no free liquids in the shipping container are not considered to be a hazardous waste. Never dispose of solvents by pouring them into containers of used rags and towels. For more information on managing shop rags and towels, see the DWEE guidance document titled “Solvent-Contaminated Shop Towels, Rags, and Wipes.”

Parts Cleaning and Degreasing

Areas where parts are cleaned and degreased with organic solvents should be kept away from floor drains. Keep parts washers closed while not in use to avoid evaporation, spills, fires, and explosive hazards. Never intentionally evaporate solvents as a means of disposal and never pour used cleaning solution onto the ground or into a storm drain, septic tank, or dry well. If using high pressure washing with hot water, wastewater may be treated with an oil/water separator or other system.

Store sludge from tanks in a closed and clearly labeled container. Do not dispose of sludge on the ground or in a dumpster. Do not use a septic tank pumping service to remove sludge from parts washers. See the DWEE guidance document titled “Parts Washers” for more information on hazardous waste generated by parts washers.

Engine Steam Cleaning

Conduct engine steam cleaning inside within a designated location and prevent wastewater from discharging onto the ground. Wastewater may be discharged to a municipal sanitary sewer. Obtain permission from the municipal wastewater treatment facility before discharge to determine if there are any specific pre-treatment requirements or other limitations.

Auto Body Refinishing and Painting

Painting should be performed in a dedicated area with no floor drains. Painting materials and residues should never enter the drainage system unless the system is specifically designed to handle these wastes. Perform a hazardous waste determination on paint overspray paper and paint filters and dispose of them accordingly.

Pour any unused paint into a special closed container labeled "Waste Paint" and never intentionally evaporate paint as a means of disposal. Do not spray cleaning solvent for paint guns onto paint filters. Spray the cleaner into a container then add it to the "Waste Paint" container for disposal.

Radiator Repair

Used solder that is recycled through a scrap metal recycler is not considered a hazardous waste. Never dispose of used solder on the ground or in a dumpster.

Boil tanks must be located in a secure area with secondary containment. Hazardous waste determinations must be performed on drainage from boil-out tanks and the accumulated sludge from the treatment of recycled rinse waters.

RESOURCES:

- DWEE Home Page <https://dwee.nebraska.gov/>

Contacts:

- DWEE Main Number (402) 471-2186
- DWEE Toll Free Number (877) 253-2603
- DWEE Hazardous Waste Compliance Assistant (402) 471-8308
- Email questions to: DWEE.moreinfo@nebraska.gov

DWEE Publications:

- Environmental Guidance Document – "Sump, Pit, Trench, & Trap Wastes: Hazardous Waste Determinations"
- Environmental Guidance Document – "Waste Determinations and Hazardous Waste Testing"
- Environmental Guidance Document – "Antifreeze Waste Considerations"
- Environmental Guidance Document – "Universal Waste Regulations"
- Environmental Guidance Document – "Aerosol Can Waste"
- Environmental Guidance Document – "Used Oil & Oil Filter Management"

- Environmental Guidance Document – “Parts Washers”
Guidance documents are available on the DWEE website by clicking “Visit Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (DEE),” selecting “Forms,” and “Publications, Grants & Forms.”
- [Title 128 – Nebraska Hazardous Waste Regulations](#)
- [Title 132 – Nebraska Integrated Solid Waste Management Regulations](#)
Titles are available on the DWEE website by clicking “Visit Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (DEE),” selecting “Resources and Services,” “Laws & Regulations,” and “Rules & Regulations.”

Produced by: Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment, 245 Fallbrook Blvd. Ste.100, Lincoln, NE 68521; (402) 471-2186. To view this and other information related to our agency, visit our website at <https://dwee.nebraska.gov/>.