

## Environmental Programs

### Disposal and Treatment of Special Waste

Special wastes are generated by both businesses and individuals, and include common substances like paints, cleaning products, pesticides, aerosol cans, lubricating oil, and fluorescent lights. In Yukon, there are no landfills or permanent disposal facilities specifically designed for special waste. This means that special waste generally cannot be disposed of in the landfill like regular waste materials. Improper disposal of special waste can cause groundwater, surface water and soil contamination, and pose a risk to human and animal health.

There are generally three disposal options for special waste generated in Yukon:

- 1) Delivery to or collection by a permitted special waste management facility – there are a number of facilities in Yukon that are permitted to accept specific types of special waste generated by other people or businesses. These businesses may dispose of some of the waste material onsite (e.g., in a waste oil burner), but often the material will be transported by the company out of Yukon for final disposal. The Environmental Programs Branch can provide a list of permitted facilities.
- 2) Participation in the Yukon government annual special waste collection program – once per year, the Yukon government assists householders that generate special waste to dispose of the waste. More information can be obtained on the [Community Operations website](#).
- 3) Disposal or treatment of the special waste onsite – a common example of this is the incineration of waste oil in a waste oil burner as a means of safely disposing of the material and producing energy.

In some cases, it may be possible to treat the special waste to allow it to be reused or to eliminate its hazardous properties so that it can be disposed of more easily. Specific options for disposing of or treating common special wastes are described in this guidance document.

### Disposal Options

#### Waste Oil and Waste Oil Filters

A common method of disposing of waste oil is by incineration in a waste oil burner. Consult the “General Information on Waste Oil” document for more information on waste oil disposal methods. If the waste oil is contaminated, it cannot be incinerated and must be brought to a permitted special waste management facility or collected through the Yukon government special waste collection program.

Oil filters can be disposed of at a regular landfill as long as they have been thoroughly drained of oil. In order to ensure that most of the oil has been drained from the filters, follow these steps:

1. Puncture the top of the filter
2. Set the filter on a rack with a container underneath to collect the draining oil and allow the filter to drain for 12-24 hours
3. Crush the filter to increase waste oil recovery.

### **Asbestos**

Asbestos is one of the few special waste materials that can be disposed of in a regular landfill. This is because the primary risk from asbestos is due to the inhalation of asbestos fibres rather than environmental contamination. It is at the discretion of the operator of the facility as to whether they accept asbestos and Environment Yukon does not maintain a list of facilities that accept asbestos. Therefore, you should contact the facility operator prior to bringing your asbestos to the landfill. Information on Yukon government-operated solid waste disposal facilities can be obtained from the [Community Operations website](#).

### **Leftover Paint**

Oil- and water-based paints can be disposed of at a regular landfill once the paint has completely dried out. Lead-based paint must be disposed of at a permitted special waste management facility or through the special waste collection program.

## **Treatment Options**

### **Waste Antifreeze**

Used antifreeze can be recycled in-house using appropriate antifreeze recycling equipment to remove particulates and restore anti-corrosion additives, allowing the antifreeze to be reused. This helps to reduce waste and can save money on disposal costs.

### **Waste Solvents**

Used solvents can be recycled in-house using appropriate solvent recycling equipment to remove impurities, allowing the solvent to be reused. This helps to reduce waste and can save money on disposal costs.

### **Photochemical Waste**

While photochemical waste is a special waste because it is corrosive, photochemical waste also contains silver that can be recovered from the solution. Recovery of the silver will not change the fact that the waste is special waste, but it can generate some revenue to offset the cost of properly disposing of the photochemical waste. Two common methods for recovering silver from photoprocessing fixers include:

- Chemical recovery – The silver-bearing solution is passed through a steel wool cartridge and the silver reacts with the iron, which goes into solution as an ion. The metallic silver, which is released as a solid, attaches to the steel wool and can be recovered from the cartridge. Silver recovered in this way is generally about 95% pure.
- Electrolytic recovery – This method yields virtually pure silver, but the necessary equipment is expensive. The fixer and developer are run through an electrolytic recovery unit that takes the

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silver out of solution. When coupled with a chemical recovery cartridge, silver can be removed down to concentrations as low as 0.01 parts per million.

Before or after silver recovery, waste photochemical fixers and cleaners must be disposed of at a permitted special waste management facility or through the special waste collection program.

## Spills of Special Waste

The *Spills Regulations* describe the size and kinds of spills that must be reported. The person who possesses or controls a special waste at the time of a spill, or who causes a spill, is responsible for reporting it and for notifying anyone who may be adversely affected by it. Containment and clean-up action should begin as soon as possible to protect human health and the natural environment.

**Spills must be reported immediately to the  
Yukon Spills Report Centre in Whitehorse at (867) 667-7244  
(24 hour service) or an Environmental Protection Officer.**  
*Collect calls are accepted.*

## Other Topics

Fact Sheets are also available on the following topics:

- Special Waste Regulations – General Information
- General Information on Waste Oil
- Storage and Handling of Special Waste

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### For more information on the Special Waste Regulations, please contact:

Environmental Programs Branch (V-8)  
Environment Yukon  
Box 2703  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Y1A 2C6

Phone: (867) 667-5683  
Toll Free: 1-800-661-0408 extension 5683  
Fax: (867) 393-6205  
Email: [envprot@gov.yk.ca](mailto:envprot@gov.yk.ca)  
Web: [www.env.gov.yk.ca](http://www.env.gov.yk.ca)

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