General Tips
☑ Buy only what you need, and substitute less or non-toxic materials when feasible.
☑ Follow safety precautions and other instructions on the product label.
☑ Keep all products out of the reach of children and pets.
☑ Never pour vehicle waste into storm drains, sewer, septic system, or onto the ground.
☑ Know where you will dispose of and store materials before doing-it-yourself. Call 1-800-RECYCLE if you are unsure where to take the waste.
☑ Keep all fluids separate and labeled to make proper recycling and disposal easier.
☑ All automotive wastes can be reduced by using alternate transportation such as walking, bicycling, carpooling, vanpooling and taking the bus.

Other Information
For information on how to properly dispose of household hazardous waste, local waste reduction/recycling programs, and other recycling information call 1-800-RECYCLE.

Ecology Regional Offices
Northwest (425) 649-7000
Southwest (360) 407-6300
Central (509) 575-2490
Eastern (509) 329-3400

Automotive Waste and the Do-It-Yourselfer

How to reduce, recycle, and dispose of automotive wastes properly and avoid toxic releases.

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What’s The Problem?
Dumping used motor oil in the back yard, down storm drains, or in the garbage contaminates ground or surface water and soil. When used as a dust suppressant or for weed abatement on roads, oil will run off during rains, polluting water with heavy metals and other toxic contaminants. This is a health hazard to wildlife and humans. Used motor oil is the single largest source of oil pollution. One pint of oil can produce a one-acre slick on surface water.

Vehicle batteries contain corrosive materials and heavy metals that may contaminate soil and ground or surface water if disposed of improperly.

Dumping antifreeze on the ground may contaminate soil or surface water sources.

Nearly all of a car’s wastes are toxic to varying degrees, and present environmental and human health hazards if disposed of improperly. Toxic materials cause injury or death if ingested, inhaled or absorbed through the skin. None of these materials should end up in a sewer, septic system, storm drain, back yard or empty lot.

It is illegal to discharge automotive waste directly to surface water, storm drains, or onto the ground, where rainfall can carry it into the ground water or nearby surface water. Civil penalties of up to $10,000 may be imposed. In extreme cases, criminal penalties may also be imposed (RCW 70.95i.060). Property found to be contaminated is difficult to sell without doing expensive cleanup, and the owners of the property may find it difficult to obtain loans against their property once banks are aware of the problem.
### Hazard

**Lead-Acid Batteries**
- Lead is a toxic heavy metal. Battery acid is corrosive.
- Contains ethylene glycol which is toxic. Animals are attracted to its sweet taste and it will kill them.
- Flammable and toxic. Contains benzene, a cancer causing chemical that can be inhaled or absorbed through the skin.
- Brake fluid is corrosive. Transmission fluid contains petroleum distillates and is ignitable.
- Many degreasers contain chlorinated solvents and are very hazardous.
- Most contain toxic ingredients. Some contain phosphates which promote the growth of algae in lakes and rivers.

**Flammable and Toxic**
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- Contain phosphates which contribute to the sweet taste and it will kill them.
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- Brake fluid is corrosive. Transmission fluid contains petroleum distillates and is ignitable.
- Many degreasers contain chlorinated solvents and are very hazardous.
- Most contain toxic ingredients. Some contain phosphates which promote the growth of algae in lakes and rivers.

**Cleaners and Polishes**
- See label instructions.
- Absorb spills and take contaminated absorbent to a hazardous waste collection program. See label instructions.
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**CFCs or Freon (Air Conditioner)**
- These gases are harmful to the Earth’s protective ozone layer.

### Storage

**Always Clearly Label the Container**
- Store upright in a sturdy, acid-resistant, leak-proof container.
- Store in approved containers, away from living areas, ignition sources and direct sunlight.
- Store in original containers. 
- Store separately in original containers.
- Store in original containers.

**Recyclable**
- Recyclable. Do not mix with other substances.
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- Recyclable.
- Recyclable. Exchange your old battery when purchasing a replacement.
- Recyclable on limited basis. Use professional services that recycle antifreeze.

### How to Avoid Spills or Releases

**Always Keep Securely Covered**
- Put large drip pan under crankcase before opening. Check for oil leaks regularly & repair them.
- Store upright. Place leaking batteries in a sturdy, acid-resistant, leak-proof container.
- Use large enough pan when flushing radiator. Repair radiator leaks.
- Don’t overfill your tank.
- Follow proper filling and draining techniques.
- Use appropriate amounts according to instructions on the container.

### How to Clean-up Spills

**Recyclable**
- Neutralize small acid spills (under 2 gallons) using cement, lime or baking soda.
- Small spills may be wiped up and discarded in the garbage.
- Clean up spills immediately with cat litter or absorbent pads.
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### Recycling or Disposal Call 1-800-RECYCLE

**Recycling or Disposal Call 1-800-RECYCLE**
- Recyclable. Do not mix with other substances. Drain oil filter overnight (24 hrs) into drip pan to remove oil residue. Do not use oil as dust suppressant or weed killer or dispose of in a landfill.
- Use it up or save for hazardous waste collection program. Do not use as a solvent, paint thinner or weed killer.
- Keep separate from used oil. Save for hazardous waste collection program.
- Use up according to instructions or give to someone who will. Keep separate from used oil. Save for hazardous waste collection program.
- Use up according to instructions or give to someone who will, or save for hazardous waste collection program.

### Safer Alternatives or Reduction Methods

**None, however using re-refined oil saves energy and resources.**
- Purchasing longer life batteries will reduce the need for replacement and disposal.
- Non-toxic and non-flammable alternatives are available. Use water based substitutes whenever possible.
- A variety of non-toxic cleaners are available. Use the least toxic product that will accomplish the job.

### Toxic Trivia

**Used Motor Oil is the single largest source of oil pollution. The 180 million gallons of used oil spilled by do-it-yourselfers each year in the U.S. is 16 times that spilled by the Exxon Valdez in Alaska.**
- A car battery contains 20 pounds of toxic lead and one gallon of corrosive lead-contaminated sulfuric acid.
- Children and pets are attracted to antifreeze because it tastes sweet. They can be poisoned by drinking small amounts of improperly disposed antifreeze.
- Washingtonians drove their vehicles more than 54 billion miles in 2000. That’s over 51 billion pounds of air pollution released into our air.
- These wastes are commonly mixed with used oil making them difficult or impossible to recycle.
- Commercial car washes pre-treat wash water. Washing your car & degreasing auto parts at home sends corrosive contaminants directly into surface and groundwater.

### Tires

**Tires**
- Tire piles attract rodents, mosquitoes & other pests, & are a fire hazard. Toxics are released to air & water when tires burn.
- Tires can be recycled. Some worn tires can be treaded.
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**Recycling or Disposal Call 1-800-RECYCLE**
- Recyclable. Use large enough pan to soak up and discard the waste.
- Small spills may be wiped up and discarded in the garbage.
- Clean up spills immediately with cat litter or absorbent pads.