

New York Hazardous Waste Treatment, Storage, and Disposal of Shop Towels, Industrial Rags, and Soiled Clothing

Policy DSH-HW-03-09, 6 NYCRR Part 372 and Subpart 373-1

September 2008

The Problem

As they are used, shop towels, industrial rags, and soiled clothing can become contaminated with hazardous waste such as solvents, petroleum products, sludge, and heavy metals, and are often improperly managed.

The Solution

Towels, rags and clothing contaminated with hazardous wastes can be sent as non-hazardous waste to off-site industrial laundries, or on-site laundries. They must be managed as non-exempt hazardous waste until they are sent to be laundered.



Are they hazardous?

Towels, rags and clothing are considered hazardous if they are contaminated with an EPA F-listed waste (see reverse side); or a hazardous waste that is ignitable (free liquid with a flashpoint less than 140°F), reactive (violently reacts with air, water or spontaneously), corrosive (free liquid with a pH lower than 2.0 or higher than 12.5) or toxic as determined by the toxicity characteristic leaching procedure (TCLP).

Yes, my rags are hazardous. What now?

If you have determined that your towels, rags and clothing are a hazardous waste, they can be transported as non-hazardous waste to industrial laundries or on-site laundries. These hazardous items must be managed as non-exempt hazardous waste until they are loaded onto a vehicle and taken to be laundered. The hazardous towels, rags and clothing must be included in your monthly hazardous waste calculation which may affect your shop's generator status. Generators of hazardous waste are subject to different requirements, depending on the amount of waste they generate and store on-site.



Container and Storage requirements

Towels, rags and clothing sent off-site for laundering may **not contain free liquids** (can't wring any liquids out of any of the rags) and must be stored in USDOT-compliant closed-lid containers until they arrive at the laundry. Don't leave them out to dry. Immediately after use they must be placed in a closed container and no additional solvents are to be added.



Because of fire potential, containers holding flammable materials, such as solvent-saturated rags, must be managed according to all local fire district standards including (but not limited to) container type, color, and labels. Contact your local fire district for the specific requirements for these containers.

(over)



New York State
ENVIRONMENTAL
FACILITIES
CORPORATION

Remove Solvents

Containers storing rags to be laundered may not contain free liquids. Free liquids should be collected and reused, or, if not reusable, managed as a separate hazardous waste stream. Liquids and solvents can be removed from saturated towels by a wringer, centrifuge, or gravity drain. Recovered solvents may be reused in less critical operations; distilled on site for reuse; sent off site for recycling, or transported to a fuel blender.



Best Management Practices

Keep hazardous towels, rags and clothing in a separate air-tight container from non-hazardous ones. Mixing the two could make the entire container a hazardous waste, increasing the amount that must be included in your monthly generator status calculation.

Do not throw dirty wipes, paper towels or rags into the dumpster if they have come into contact with hazardous solvents or waste.

Examine how equipment cleaning practices might be adjusted to reduce the number of towels, wipes, or rags that are used for this purpose.

Employees should be trained in proper machine operation/maintenance and provided with appropriate equipment so that they correctly dispense, deliver, and mix materials.

F-listed hazardous wastes are federally listed non-specific source hazardous wastes. This list identifies wastes from common manufacturing and industrial processes, such as solvents that have been used in cleaning or degreasing operations. Examples of F-listed wastes include:

Acetone	Nitrobenzene	Ethyl benzene	Carbon tetrachloride
Xylene	Toluene	Isobutanol	Cresols
Benzene	Trichloroethylene	Cyclohexanone	n-butyl alcohol
Tetrachloroethylene	Chlorinated fluorocarbons	Pyridine	Carbon disulfide
Methylene chloride	Ethyl acetate	Methyl ethyl ketone	1,1,1-trichloroethane

For more information on F-listed wastes contact our office!

The information in this fact sheet is intended for general reference only; it is not a full and complete statement of the technical or legal requirements associated with the regulation.

Helping New York's Small Businesses understand and comply with environmental regulations.

Small Business Environmental Assistance Program
NYS ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITIES CORPORATION
625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12207-2997
1-800-780-7227 / 518-402-7462
sbeap@nysefc.org

David A. Paterson, Governor

Matthew J. Millea, Acting President