



Focus on: Spent Antifreeze



Figure 1: Only dump spent antifreeze into compatible containers.

Contact information

Central Regional Office:
509-575-2490

Eastern Regional Office:
509-329-3400

Northwest Regional Office:
206-594-0000

Southwest Regional Office:
360-407-6300

ADA Accessibility

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6700 or email at hwtrpubs@ecy.wa.gov, or visit ecology.wa.gov/accessibility. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.

Antifreeze is an ethylene glycol based coolant. Only ethylene glycol based antifreeze can be managed under the special requirements for **spent antifreeze** ([WAC 173-303-522](https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=173-303-522)¹).

In Washington State, spent antifreeze is regulated as a [dangerous waste](#)² for two reasons:

1. Ethylene glycol is toxic.
2. It may contain lead and other hazardous contaminants.

Spent antifreeze is antifreeze that is completely spent and cannot be reused without recycling. You can recycle³ spent antifreeze so it does not count as a dangerous waste and possibly affect your [generator category](#).⁴ You will not have to report or manifest recycled spent antifreeze as a dangerous waste.

If you do not recycle spent antifreeze, you must manage it as a fully regulated dangerous waste. **Usable** antifreeze is antifreeze that can be used or reused in your shop without treatment (this does not include on-site reclamation).

¹ <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=173-303-522>

² <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=173-303-522>

³ Recycling means reclamation and reuse WAC 173-303-522(1)

⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/GeneratorCategory>

How to manage spent antifreeze safely

You must manage spent antifreeze in a way that poses no risk to human health or the environment. There are minimum special requirements you must follow.

- **Never pour spent antifreeze down or on:**
 - The ground.
 - Sewers.
 - Storm drains.
 - Septic tanks.
 - Dry wells.
- Drain spent antifreeze from radiators, heater cores, equipment, and other sources into [compatible containers](#)⁵ (such as metal or plastic drums and jugs) as soon as possible to prevent spills.
- Routinely recycle spent antifreeze to keep volumes low.
- Keep a spill-kit with readily available clean-up material such as sorbents in a central location, accessible to employees. Train employees to use it. Spills of spent antifreeze are subject to the requirements of [WAC 173-303-145](#).⁶
- **Do not mix spent antifreeze!** Keep spent and usable antifreeze separated and away from other liquids and chemicals. Keep used antifreeze equipment (such as funnels, pads, storage containers) separate from equipment used with other wastes.



Figure 2: Prevent spills by draining spent antifreeze into compatible containers as soon as possible.

How to store spent antifreeze

- Use compatible containers that are in good condition.
- Clearly label or mark all containers “**spent antifreeze**”. Ecology has a premade [label](#)⁷ available or you can create your own. We suggest labeling or marking the container “toxic”, but this is not required.
- Ensure all labels and markings are legible and large enough to read from a distance.
- Keep the containers closed except when adding or removing antifreeze.
- Maintain containers so they do not leak, rupture, or tip over.



Figure 3: Use Ecology's premade label for spent antifreeze.

⁵ <https://ecology.wa.gov/DWContainers>

⁶ <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=173-303-145>

⁷ <https://ecology.wa.gov/PrintDWLabels>

- Use secondary containment and store containers on impermeable surfaces (e.g. a non-porous concrete surface), away from drains.
- Keep usable and recycled antifreeze in separate containers and identify them clearly to avoid cross contamination. For example, label the container “**usable antifreeze only**”.

How to recycle your spent antifreeze

There are three options for recycling antifreeze.

1. **On-site recycling:** Use equipment on site and operated by your employees that can reclaim spent antifreeze.
 - You can recycle antifreeze through reuse, distillation, filtration, recycling machines, or ion exchange.
 - Be aware that used filters from an antifreeze recycling machine may designate and be handled as dangerous waste.
2. **Off-site recycling:** Use Transporters with a valid EPA and State ID number to ship spent antifreeze off site to vendors who can recycle it.
 - You are responsible for ensuring the vendor properly recycles your spent antifreeze. Maintain a record.
3. **Mobile recycling vendor:** A van or truck equipped with a recycling unit visits your facility and recycles spent antifreeze on site.



Figure 4: Use equipment on site to recycle antifreeze.

You must keep all receipts of spent antifreeze shipments and filter management for at least five years from the time of generation.

On-site recycling records

Keep the following records for at least five years.

- Amount of antifreeze recycled.
- Date antifreeze was recycled.
- Weight of dangerous waste filters.
- Amount of sludge shipped off site.
- If you use a recycling machine, the amount of antifreeze recycled each month.

Off-site recycling records

Keep the following records for at least five years. This information can be held in the form of an invoice, bill of lading, and/or manifest.

- Name and address of your facility.
- Name and address of the transporter and recycler.
- Quantity of spent antifreeze and waste filters shipped off-site.
- Date of the shipment.

Vendors may ask how you manage wastes to ensure other wastes are not mixed with spent antifreeze.

Find companies that recycle spent antifreeze and sell on-site recycling equipment on our [find a hazardous waste service provider webpage](#).⁸

How to transport spent antifreeze

The containers must be labeled with:

- **“Washington state dangerous waste laws prohibit improper disposal. If found, contact the nearest police or public safety authority and the Washington State Department of Ecology.”**
- Your facility’s name and address.

The shipping papers must include:

- “Material not regulated by DOT (Washington State Dangerous Waste Only, Toxic).”
- Your EPA and State ID number.

If you are a small quantity generator, you can transport spent antifreeze yourself. You do not need an EPA and State ID number or license to transport spent antifreeze to a recycler.

If your county has a collection site for recycling dangerous waste, check with them to determine your best options for recycling your antifreeze with that site.

If you spill spent antifreeze during transport

Immediately notify:

- The [Department of Ecology](#).⁹ Outside of normal business hours you will be transferred to Washington Emergency Management Division’s 24-hour spill number.
- Washington Emergency Management Division’s 24-hour spill number: 1-800-258-5990.
 - If a report is made to Ecology first, you do not need to report to Washington’s Emergency Management Division.
- Everyone according to your company’s standard operating procedures.

⁸ <https://ecology.wa.gov/DWContractors>

⁹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/report-a-spill>

If you don't recycle your spent antifreeze

If you do not recycle your spent antifreeze, you must follow the full Dangerous Waste Regulations,¹⁰ including counting and manifesting the antifreeze as dangerous waste.

Learn more about the Dangerous Waste Regulations on our [dangerous waste guidance webpage](#)¹¹ or our [guide for small quantity generators](#).¹²

Questions?

If you have questions about safely managing spent antifreeze, visit our [antifreeze webpage](#)¹³ or contact the nearest [regional Ecology office](#)¹⁴ and ask to speak with a dangerous waste specialist.

Department of Ecology's Regional Offices



Central Regional Office, Union Gap: 509-575-2490

Counties: Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, Yakima

Eastern Regional Office, Spokane: 509-329-3400

Counties: Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman

Northwest Regional Office, Shoreline: 206-594-0000

Counties: Island, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom

Southwest Regional Office, Lacey: 360-407-6300

Counties: Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Mason, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum

¹⁰ 173-303-522 WAC

¹¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/DWBasics>

¹² <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/1604027.html>

¹³ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Antifreeze>

¹⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/contact>