Managing spent antifreeze in an Underground Storage Tank (UST)

If I manage or store spent antifreeze in an UST, do the UST regulations apply?

It depends. If the antifreeze is recycled, the UST regulations apply.

If the spent antifreeze is mixed with another dangerous waste or is not recycled as explained below, the storage of spent antifreeze in an UST is regulated under the dangerous waste regulations 173-303 WAC and not regulated under the UST regulations.

In regulatory terms, how is spent antifreeze classified?

In this document, the term “antifreeze” means ethylene glycol-based coolant, which is used as a heat exchange medium in motor vehicle radiators, motorized equipment, or other industrial processes. It is regulated as a hazardous substance by the Department of Ecology (Ecology). If spent antifreeze, which has not been mixed with another dangerous waste, is recycled by being reclaimed or reused (i.e. not burned), its storage in an UST is not subject to full regulation under WAC 173-303.

If you have questions about the antifreeze you are storing in an underground storage tank, contact Toxics Cleanup Program (TCP) staff at your regional Ecology office (See back page for region phone numbers).

How should I label my spent antifreeze storage tanks?

You must identify the product stored in the tank and its major risk, but it does not need a dangerous waste label. The labeling requirements are met by placing the labels “SPENT ANTIFREEZE” and “TOXIC” on the tank lids or adjacent to where the substance is added and removed from the tank.
Are there other options for storing spent antifreeze?

Spent antifreeze can be stored in other compatible containers such as aboveground storage tanks, drums, or totes. Remember to keep the container closed, labeled, on an impermeable surface, and in an area where secondary containment is installed.

How will owners and operators be notified if a spent antifreeze UST should be registered with the state and follow specific operational and maintenance requirements?

When an Ecology inspector visits a site, he/she will determine if the spent antifreeze tank is regulated by the UST regulations. If the tank is subject to, and out of compliance with, the state’s UST regulations, the owner/operator will be given a schedule to bring the tank into compliance. Another option is to permanently close the tank. If the schedule deadlines are not met, Ecology may pursue enforcement and issue a monetary fine.

What if my UST is not equipped to store spent antifreeze in a manner that complies with Washington’s UST regulations?

Until a spent antifreeze UST is in compliance with the UST regulations, the UST’s owner/operator should not deposit and/or store any spent antifreeze into that UST. Any spent antifreeze stored in a non-compliant UST should be pumped from the tank.

The Washington state UST regulations require a hazardous substance be stored in secondarily-contained or double-walled USTs. In addition, the UST will need to be upgraded to meet spill and overfill prevention requirements. If the tank does not meet the UST regulations’ corrosion protection requirements or cannot be upgraded, the tank must be taken out of service until it can be permanently closed.

ECOLOGY REGIONAL OFFICES

Please contact the nearest Ecology regional office where your facility is located if you have questions related to spent antifreeze USTs or the WA UST regulations.

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