

Focus on: Reporting Dangerous Waste Spills



Report dangerous waste spills immediately.

Immediately call 911 if the spill is an emergency.

Contact information

National Response Center:

1-800-424-8802

Washington Emergency Management Division:

1-800-258-5990

Ecology Regional Offices:

Central: 509-575-2490

Eastern: 509-329-3400

Northwest: 206-594-0000

Southwest: 360-407-6300

ADA Accessibility

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

This focus sheet will help you determine if you need to report a spill under section -145 of the [Dangerous Waste Regulations](#).¹ It explains who to call and what to report in the event of a spill on site. Refer to the full regulations for details.

Be aware that other local, state, and federal agencies have their own reporting requirements. Depending on materials involved and location of the spill, you may also need to follow regulations of other Ecology programs (such as Water Quality, Air Quality, Spills, or Toxics Cleanup).

What to do if you have a dangerous waste spill

Immediately [notify Ecology](#)² and other appropriate agencies when there is a spill, leak, or discharge of any dangerous waste or hazardous substance. You must report any spill that poses a threat to human health or the environment, regardless of size.

There are no penalties for reporting a spill unnecessarily, but there may be significant penalties for **not** reporting one. If you are not sure if you should report the spill, contact your regional Ecology office or another spill responder for guidance.

Take immediate action!

If you discover a spill, the dangerous waste regulations require you stop or control it, clean up released materials,³ and then **immediately** report it. Cleaning up released materials may include shutting off valves or putting overturned drums back upright. Only take these actions if it is safe to do so.

¹ <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-303-145>

² <https://ecology.wa.gov/Report-a-spill>

³ WAC 173-303-145(3)

How can you tell if a threat to human health or the environment exists?

- The material's characteristics or state criteria.
- How quickly the substance is contained.
- The amount spilled.
- The environmental media involved (such as air, land, or water).



Figure 1: Immediately report a spill if the material may enter water ways.

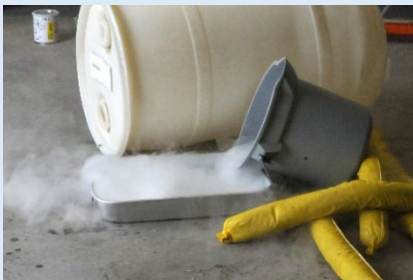


Figure 2: Dangerous wastes and hazardous substances may be gaseous as well as liquid.



Figure 3: Identify the material's characteristics to know if it is a threat to human health or the environment.

When to report a spill

- If anyone needs medical attention or examination due to the exposure.
- If the material may enter water ways. This includes surface water, groundwater, storm drains, or ditches.
- If fish, wildlife, or domestic animals may experience illness, injury, stress, or death.
- If the amount of substances released in the air may harm people, animals, or plants.
- If you cannot quickly control, contain, and clean up a spill to soil.

When to report a spill inside your building or containment area

- If it escapes the confining area, such as through a doorway, crack, joint, or drain.
- If it threatens human health or the environment.

After the spill

Once the spill is contained and reported, follow these steps:

1. Manage the waste properly.
2. Clean up the site.
3. Dispose of the waste properly.
4. Decontaminate the site.

You may hire a qualified spill contractor to do the clean up under supervision from an environmental regulatory agency like Ecology.

What information will I need to report a spill?

- Responsible party's name, company name, phone number(s), and address (refer to your facility's [Dangerous Waste Emergency Information](#)⁴ card.)
- Location of the spill.
- Materials involved.
- Estimated quantity released.
- Date and time the incident started.
- Cause of the spill.
- Current status at the source (i.e., stopped, controlled, or ongoing).
- People or resources affected.
- Any other agencies or contractors you've notified (such as local 911).

Large quantity generators are also required to provide the name and phone number of person reporting, extent of injuries (if any), and possible hazards to human health or the environment outside the facility.

⁴ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/0804022.html>



Figure 4: Responders need to know the materials involved so they can take proper precautions.



Figure 5: Report leaks and spills immediately upon discovery.



Figure 6: Immediately report any spill.

How do I know if the material I spilled needs to be reported?

If your spill involves materials with ignitable, corrosive, reactive, toxic, or persistent properties, it needs to be reported. You can get information about the hazards of a particular material from a variety of sources, such as:

- Container labels.
- Safety data sheets.
- Waste codes.
- Shipping papers or manifests.
- [The US Dept. of Transportation Emergency Response Guide](https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat/erg/emergency-response-guidebook-erg).⁵
- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration Occupational Chemical Database](https://www.osha.gov/chemicaldata/index.html).⁶
- [The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npg/).⁷

Who should I contact?

You should immediately report the spill to **both**:

- Washington Emergency Management Division: 1-800-258-5990
- National Response Center: 1-800-424-8802

Depending on the type of spill, there may be additional reporting requirements.

Release of hazardous or extremely hazardous substance:

- State Emergency Response Commission: 1-800-258-5990.
- Your [Local Emergency Planning Committee](https://ecology.wa.gov/LEPCcontacts).⁸

Dangerous waste:

- Call 911.
- Your [regional Ecology office](https://ecology.wa.gov/contact).⁹

Leaking underground storage tanks, oil spills,¹⁰ or spills to air:

- Your [regional Ecology office](https://ecology.wa.gov/contact).⁹

You may also need to submit hazardous chemical information under the [Emergency Planning & Community Right-to-Know Act](https://ecology.wa.gov/EPCRA).¹¹

⁵ <https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat/erg/emergency-response-guidebook-erg>

⁶ <https://www.osha.gov/chemicaldata/index.html>

⁷ <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npg/>

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

⁹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/contact>

¹⁰ Oil industry contingency plan holders may have different reporting timeframes designated by their contingency plans.

¹¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/EPCRA>

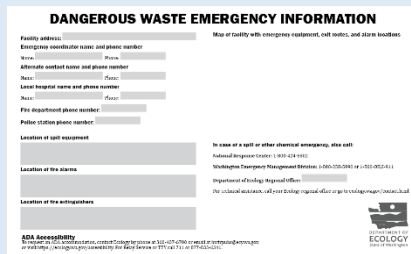


Figure 7: A dangerous waste emergency information card¹² will provide employees with important details following a spill.



Figure 8: Have employees practice spill response before an emergency situation occurs.



Figure 9: Properly dispose of cleanup materials like absorbent pads.



Figure 10: Our Spill Response Team works with other responders to protect human health and the environment.

How to prepare for a spill

Prepare for a potential spill or emergency by filling out and posting a dangerous waste emergency information card¹² in any area where dangerous waste is stored or accumulated.

Depending on your generator category, you may be required to develop a contingency plan.¹³ Even if it is not required, we recommend creating a plan for your staff to follow in case of emergency.

Follow these steps to make sure you're prepared for a spill:

1. **Create a spill control plan and train staff** so they know how to use it. Make sure your plan establishes who to notify in the event of a spill and includes specific cleanup instructions, safety requirements, and evaluation guidelines.
2. **Make sure you have necessary spill containment materials and personal protective equipment.** Have employees practice using them before an emergency. The materials should be easy to find and use.
3. **Place small containers under all connections, pumps, and potential spill or drip areas.** All liquid materials accumulated in these small containers must be contained, temporarily stored, reused, or disposed of properly.
4. **Properly dispose of cleanup materials.** Cleaning products used for spill cleanup are likely to be dangerous or hazardous waste. They must be properly contained, labeled, and transported to an authorized disposal site.
5. Have a list of cleanup firms available in case you need their help.

How Ecology can help

Our main role during spills and cleanup actions is to protect human health and the environment. We can provide information about:

- Ways to identify sensitive resources that may have been affected.
- Steps to control and contain the spill.
- Spill response contractors.
- Proper cleanup procedures.

We may also conduct investigations and pursue appropriate compliance and enforcement actions if we have reason to believe actions do not comply with the dangerous waste regulations.

¹² <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/0804022.html>

¹³ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2004029.html>

Get more help

For assistance, please contact a hazardous waste specialist at one of the following Ecology offices.

Map of Counties Served



Southwest Regional Office, Lacey: 360-407-6300

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

Northwest Regional Office, Shoreline: 206-594-0000

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

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