

Focus on: Dangerous Waste Guidance for Gas Stations



Figures 1 and 2. Gas stations must manage dangerous waste properly.

Why proper dangerous waste management is important for gas stations

Gas stations across the state generate dangerous wastes such as:

- Petroleum-soaked kitty litter or other absorbents used on leaks or spills.
- Petroleum and water mixtures (from well testing, spill buckets, sumps, and stormwater runoff).
- Sludges from catch basins and oil water separators.
- Contaminated wastewater from car washes.

If not managed properly, dangerous wastes can damage the environment and present significant risk to employees, property, and the community.

Although small amounts of waste generated by a single gas station may not create a risk to those exposed and the immediate area, they provide a significant risk to human health and the environment overall when multiplied by the number of gas stations in the state.

Dangerous wastes can be toxic, flammable, and caustic. They don't belong on the ground, down the drain, or in the dumpster.

We recommend the following dangerous waste management and safety practices:

- Thoroughly comply with the dangerous waste regulations to safeguard human health, the environment, and avoid costly penalties.
- Reduce risks to your employees, property, and community by providing required training, notification, and preparedness.
- Help all of us maintain a clean and healthy environment in Washington state.

How to properly manage dangerous waste at gas stations

- Store ignitable waste in approved containers.
- Ship waste according to the U.S. Department of Transportation regulations.
- Make sure containers and wastes are compatible.
- Manage contact water or water from testing wells as dangerous waste, or test and [designate](#)¹ each drum.
- Additional requirements may apply depending on your [generator category](#).²

Check spill buckets before and after every delivery. Remove any debris, liquid, and ice.³

¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Designation>

² <https://ecology.wa.gov/GeneratorCategory>

³ See more details in WAC 173-360A-0420 (1)(a)(i).

Only rain down the drain

- When power-washing, prevent wash water from flowing into storm drains and ditches.
 - Block storm drains with mats.
 - Use sand bags to direct water to the collection area.
 - Use sump pumps and hoses to direct water to sewer.
- Don't put liquid from spill buckets down the drain. Remove and properly dispose of liquid.
- Don't allow soapy water into the storm drain.
- Know where your drains go in case of a fire, spill, or other emergency. Get maps showing where they lead. Contact your public utility for assistance.
- Know if your site has a wastewater pretreatment system. If so, regularly inspect and keep records readily available.

- Create and maintain a written spill plan.
- Make sure there's a spill kit⁶ within 25 feet of your fueling station.

See more in our [Focus on UST Spills or Releases](#) publication.⁷

Employee Operator Training

If you own, manage, or work at gas stations that have USTs, you and your employees must complete the required Operator Training.⁸ This provides the minimum training necessary for individuals to operate and work at a petroleum UST site.

- **Tank operators require Class A/B training.** Training is in-depth and covers UST system general requirements, operation, and maintenance.
- **Cashiers responsible for responding to emergencies and spills when a Class A/B operator isn't on site require Class C training.** For manned facilities, someone with at least a Class C certification must be present during business hours. A current Class C Operator Training Log must be on site.

Emergencies

Each Underground Storage Tank (UST) Site must have Emergency Signage posted with emergency response information.⁴ Emergency signs **must** be visible to anyone dispensing or delivering fuel.

Your Emergency Signage should identify the location of the emergency shut-off device, a fire extinguisher, and instructions in case of an emergency. See our [Focus on Emergency Signage Required for UST Sites](#) publication.⁵

Know what to do in the event of a spill:

- Call 911 if there's an injury, explosion, or fire.
- Immediately report spills to Ecology.
- Keep a log of all spills.

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.

⁴ See details in WAC 173-360A-0550(2).

⁵ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/1209240.html>

⁶ Spill kits should include absorbent pads capable of containing 15 gallons of fuel, a storm drain plug, a non-water boom ten feet or more with a capacity of 12 gallons, and a non-metallic shovel.

⁷ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/1609336.html>

⁸ See more details in WAC 173-360A-0530.