

Formaldehyde Releasers Product Disposal for Cosmetologists, Retailers and Distributors

Washington has regulations that restrict many toxic chemicals in cosmetics made, sold, distributed, or used to provide service. These laws and rules reduce human exposures to harmful chemicals. To prevent environmental pollution, state regulations also require proper disposal of products with toxic chemicals.

Below is an overview of your responsibilities for disposing of non-compliant products. Knowing your business needs helps prevent harmful chemicals from entering the environment.

Formaldehyde releaser restrictions (for businesses)

In 2025, the state's Toxic-Free Cosmetics Act restricted formaldehyde and methylene glycol, a formaldehyde releaser. A newer regulation expands those restrictions to include all other formaldehyde releasers. This means:

1. **Starting January 1, 2027:** You can't distribute, use in services, or sell cosmetic products that have intentionally added formaldehyde releasers.
2. **January 1, 2027, through December 31, 2027:** You may sell or use in services cosmetic products containing restricted formaldehyde releasers that were in your possession before January 1, 2027. This sell-through period only applies to "in-state retailers" and "existing stock" as defined in [Washington Administrative Code 173-339](#).¹

What should I do with leftover products starting in 2028?

After December 31, 2027, you must remove unsold products from services and shelves even if you obtained them before January 1, 2027. You'll need to decide if you'll dispose of them, temporarily store them for disposal, or redistribute them out of Washington State.



You can't donate cosmetic products with restricted chemicals, including to reuse stores.

Product Description	Can I use or sell these products?	What should I do between now and Dec. 31, 2027?	What should I do starting Jan. 1, 2028?
Cosmetic products containing restricted formaldehyde releasers in your possession and physically located in Washington State before Jan. 1, 2027	Yes. Your business can sell, use in services, and distribute these items through Dec. 31, 2027 (the sell-through period).	Your business can: • Sell or use these products in services. • Redistribute these products to stores outside Washington.	The sell-through period is over. Your business must remove remaining products from shelves or services. You should dispose of these products, temporarily store them for disposal, or redistribute them outside Washington.
Cosmetic products containing restricted formaldehyde releasers acquired, in your possession, and physically located in Washington State on or after Jan. 1, 2027	No. Your business needs to remove these products from shelves and services, or redistribute them outside Washington.	Your business should prepare these products for disposal or redistribution outside Washington.	Your business should have these products disposed of or redistributed outside Washington.

¹ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-339&full=true>

How to dispose of cosmetics with restricted chemicals

To check for restricted chemicals, look at product ingredient lists or review information on the safety data sheets (SDS). You can also reach out to the manufacturer or test the cosmetic product at a laboratory.

Washington law regulates waste, especially wastes with chemicals that are harmful to human health and the environment. Many businesses generate a type of waste called **dangerous waste**, including cosmetology businesses and retailers. This could include cosmetics with restricted chemicals, alcohol-based sanitizers, and cleaning chemicals.



You can't flush dangerous waste down a drain or pour it onto the ground.

Your waste designation, management, and disposal responsibilities

You are responsible for managing all of your business waste, including cosmetics, to determine if it is dangerous waste. This process is called **designation**.

An alternative to designation is to assume that cosmetics with restricted chemicals are dangerous waste and manage them following the [Dangerous Waste Regulations](#).²

Different waste management and disposal requirements may apply to dangerous waste. Some general factors to consider are 1) how much dangerous waste you generate during a calendar month, and 2) whether you regularly generate dangerous waste or just need to dispose of waste during a one time [episodic event](#).³

For additional help:

- Read [Dangerous waste basics](#)⁴ and [Dangerous waste designation guide](#)⁵ for businesses.
- Visit our page for [small quantity generators](#).⁶ Small quantity generators generally produce less than 220 pounds of dangerous waste per month. For dangerous wastes that are extremely toxic in small amounts, the monthly limit is 2.2 pounds. Contact your municipal waste or local waste management company for more disposal options.
- You may [hire a waste service provider](#)⁷ to help you properly manage dangerous waste.

Ecology cannot determine if your cosmetics are dangerous waste for you, but you can ask for guidance.

[Contact your regional Ecology office](#)⁸ to get in touch with your local compliance team.

Consumer products contact: consumerproductreg@ecy.wa.gov.

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² <https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-303>

³ <https://ecology.wa.gov/EpisodicGeneration>

⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/DWBasics>

⁵ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/2304006.pdf>

⁶ <https://ecology.wa.gov/SQG>

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

⁸ <https://ecology.wa.gov/about-us/contact-us/region-contacts>