



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs  
*Office of Technical Assistance*

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# Household Hazardous Waste Reduction

## AUTOMOTIVE WASTE PREVENTION & MANAGEMENT

### DID YOU KNOW?

Some automotive products contain substances that can be toxic to humans and the environment. Just a gallon of dumped used motor oil can create an 8-acre slick on surface water and render one million gallons of fresh water undrinkable. Many products and wastes are also a fire hazard if stored in large amounts on your property.

If you are a "Do-It-Yourselfer" who changes your own auto fluids or does other auto maintenance, help protect the environment by using up leftover automotive products and taking wastes or unwanted products to a community-run automotive products recycling center or to a household hazardous waste collection event.


### PREVENTING AUTOMOTIVE WASTES

- Avoid buying and storing excess products that could become waste if you move or no longer need them. Try to use up what you already have or give away excess amounts to friends, autobody or service stations, or vocational schools with automotive training programs.
- Keep products and wastes in separate containers with the contents clearly labeled. *Mixtures of different wastes are not recyclable and are more difficult to dispose of properly.*
- Consider using a service station or quick-lube shop instead of doing auto maintenance yourself. Clean, neatly operated stations with good reputations are likely to properly manage hazardous wastes. Using a service station also saves you time.

### MANAGING WASTES

**Do not put auto wastes down the drain, on the ground, or in the trash.** For the nearest collection center, call the Massachusetts Office of Technical Assistance (OTA) at (617)727-3260 x 696 or the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) at (617)556-1022.

**Gasoline: No services exist to collect or recycle gasoline because it is extremely flammable and explosive.** Avoid storing excess gasoline; it jells and deteriorates with age. Burn excess gasoline in your auto (filter and add gasoline reconditioner first if gasoline is very old). Contact OTA for more information.

**Motor Oil:** Recyclable. Retailers of motor oil are required to take back up to two gallons of used oil per day, per person with a sales slip. Try to buy your oil from a retailer that accepts used oil without a sales slip (you may lose it). Many Mobil and Exxon service bay stations and quick-lube shops accept oil without a slip. Look for the "oil drop" symbol (  ) posted at some stations. Your community may also have a collection tank for residents -- call the DEP Used Oil Hotline at (617)556-1022.

**Oil Filters:** Recyclable when drained. A filter contains a significant amount of oil. Before draining, run engine first to heat the oil. Drain punctured oil filter while still warm, tilting at an angle for at least one hour (a minimum of 12 hours is required for some community collection programs). Recycle the oil. If filters are not accepted by any service stations, scrap metal dealers or a community automotive recycling center, call your community recycling office. If necessary, wrap filter in newspaper and place in trash.

**Antifreeze/Coolant:** Recyclable. Three ounces swallowed can be fatal to an adult. Animals and children are attracted by its sweet taste. Store out of reach. Some service stations, quick-lube shops and communities will recycle. Will interfere with septic systems.

**Auto Batteries:** Recyclable. The lead and acid in auto batteries can be harmful to the environment. Do not dispose of in the trash. Stores selling automotive batteries will usually accept returns at no cost. Scrap metal dealers may pay a dollar or more per battery. Trade in your old battery when buying a new one. Many communities also collect used auto batteries for recycling.

**Brake Fluid:** Ask whether a service station or quick-lube shop will accept, or take it to a household hazardous waste collection event.

**Freon<sup>®</sup>:** Recyclable. CFCs in air conditioner refrigerant can harm the stratospheric ozone layer if released to the atmosphere. Refrigerant should only be removed from your vehicle for recycling by a certified recycling professional at a service station.

**Transmission Fluid:** Ask whether a service station or quick-lube shop will accept or take it to a household hazardous waste collection event.

For more information on these and other household hazardous wastes or products, contact the Massachusetts Office of Technical Assistance at (617)727-3260 x 696.

**THANK YOU FOR PREVENTING OR MANAGING AUTO WASTES**

*This fact sheet was prepared by the Office of Technical Assistance (OTA), a branch of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. OTA's mission is to assist in reducing the use of toxic chemicals or the generation of hazardous waste by manufacturers and residents of the Commonwealth. OTA assumes no responsibility and disclaims liability for any injury or damage due to information herein. This information is available in alternate formats upon request. For further information about this fact sheet and other household hazardous waste reduction strategies, or about OTA's technical services, contact: Office of Technical Assistance, 100 Cambridge Street, Room 2109, Boston, Massachusetts, 02202; phone #(617)727-3260; fax #(617)727-3827; electronic bulletin board #(617)727-5621; web site URL: <http://www.magnet.state.ma.us/ota>.*