



## FACT SHEET

### Disposal of antifreeze and used oil



No dumping

Antifreeze is a substance added to a solvent, such as water, to lower its freezing point. Antifreeze is typically added to water in the cooling system of an internal-combustion engine so that it can be cooled below the freezing point of pure water (32 degrees F) without freezing. Ethylene glycol is the most widely used automotive cooling-system antifreeze, although methanol, ethanol, isopropyl alcohol, and propylene glycol are also used.

Ethylene glycol is highly poisonous. It has a sweet smell and taste that is appealing to pets and children. Waste antifreeze contains heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, and chromium in high enough levels to potentially make it a regulated hazardous waste. So it's very important to wipe up spills and drips

and handle both new and used antifreeze properly. The [Kentucky Regional Poison Center](#) recommends that you keep antifreeze, windshield washer fluid, motor oils and similar materials in locked storage.

Antifreeze can also be harmful to wildlife and the environment. It should not be dumped on land or discharged into a sanitary sewer, storm drain, ditch, dry well, or septic system.

#### ANTIFREEZE DO'S

- ✓ Recycle your antifreeze at a facility that uses an antifreeze recycling machine.
- ✓ Consider switching to the less toxic propylene glycol antifreeze. Note: Check first to see if using PG antifreeze will void your car's warranty. Also, don't mix the two types of antifreeze since it will harm your car's engine. (If you use antifreeze in camp or recreational vehicle toilets, definitely use PG-based antifreezes.)
- ✓ Follow safety rules if you change your own antifreeze. Buy only what you need. Wipe up spills and drips *immediately* and dispose of rags in a covered container. Keep children and pets out of the area while you are draining radiator fluid. Use "dedicated" collection equipment including funnels and transfer pans. Give away leftover antifreeze or seal the remainder out of reach of children and pets.
- ✓ Keep antifreeze and "spent" or used antifreeze in two separate, labeled closed containers. Mixing new and used contaminates the whole batch.
- ✓ Check with your local government, water treatment plant, repair shops and car dealerships. They may collect antifreeze or know of other safe disposal options.

You can access information about facilities that accept antifreeze in your community by going to the Earth 911 site at [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org) and typing in your ZIP code. Or you can call 1-800-CLEANUP.

#### ANTIFREEZE DON'TS

- Don't change coolant unnecessarily – check your owner's manual.
- Don't dispose of antifreeze in a storm drain, septic tank or dry well.
- Don't pour antifreeze on the ground.



**Remember:** antifreeze is deadly. Symptoms may not show up for hours. If you suspect a person has consumed antifreeze, call poison control right away. The emergency hotline is 1-800-222-1222 or, in Metro Louisville, 502-589-8222. If an animal has ingested antifreeze, call your veterinarian.



Did you know it's illegal to dump your used oil? Dumping used oil may result in a fine of up to \$1,000. Local laws also may provide severe penalties for dumping the substance.

Oil dumped in storm sewers, in the garbage or on the ground can eventually find its way into our water supply. Storm sewers lead to the nearest stream, river or lake. Heavy rains can transport oils dumped on the ground into our waterways. The contaminants in used oil have been linked to bronchitis; adverse impacts on human fetal development; lethal toxicity to plants and animals; and human cancers of the skin, lung, liver, bladder, kidney and gastrointestinal tract.

### **Recycling used oil conserves our resources**

Millions of gallons of used oil are carelessly dumped in Kentucky each year. Most is thrown away by people who change their own oil. The 4 million gallons of oil thrown away every year in Kentucky could be turned into heating oil for more than 5,000 homes. Re-refining used oil makes it as good as new. Used oil can be re-refined for lubricating oil with one-fourth the energy required to refine from crude. And through re-refining, 2 ½ quarts of motor oil can be recovered from one gallon of used oil. But the energy potential is lost forever when it is thrown away.

### **Happy returns**

Several Kentucky service stations and businesses have collection centers where you can drop off the used oil from your cars, lawnmowers, tractors, boats and motorcycles. To recycle your oil, simply drain it in to a suitable container, transfer it into an unbreakable, sealable container (such as a plastic milk jug or gas can) and take it to a collection center displaying this sign. *Don't use a container that has held household chemicals, like bleach.* The division has a list of recyclers online: <http://waste.ky.gov/RLA/recycling/Pages/recycling.aspx>. You can access information about recycling in your community by going to the Earth 911 site at <http://www.earth911.org/> and typing in your ZIP code. Or you can call 1-800-CLEANUP. More information, including "how to" tips on changing your oil and a guide for businesses, is available by searching "used oil" at the U.S. Environmental Protection site -- <http://www.epa.gov/>

### **USED OIL DO'S**

- ✓ Collect your used oil in a container.
- ✓ Take your used oil to a collection center.

### **USED OIL DON'TS**

- ✗ Don't dump used oil on the ground or in your garbage.
- ✗ Don't dump used oil on the roads.
- ✗ Don't dump used oil in sewers and storm drains.

Used oil artwork courtesy of the Washington State Department of Ecology.

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