

MSU Extension Publication Archive

Archive copy of publication, do not use for current recommendations. Up-to-date information about many topics can be obtained from your local Extension office.

Automotive and Petroleum Products
Michigan State University Extension Service
Household Hazardous Waste Series
Issued March 1995
2 pages

The PDF file was provided courtesy of the Michigan State University Library

Scroll down to view the publication.



AUTOMOTIVE AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

A variety of toxic products are associated with the operation of cars, trucks, motorcycles, snowmobiles, lawn mowers, chain saws and other equipment that requires petroleum products. Motor oil, antifreeze, transmission fluid, brake fluid, lead acid batteries, gasoline and other fuels may be highly flammable as well as toxic. (MSU Extension Bulletin E-2555 deals with gasoline).

Extreme caution should be taken when handling these materials. They may be a hazard to health and the environment if disposed of improperly.

NEVER DISPOSE OF ANY OF THESE PRODUCTS BY POURING THEM ON THE GROUND OR DOWN THE DRAIN OR THROWING THEM IN THE TRASH.

USED MOTOR OIL

Used motor oil is an especially common waste product. Improperly discarded oil is a significant polluting problem in Michigan. The oil drained from your car can be reprocessed and reused, to conserve petroleum resources and prevent contamination of the environment. Used motor oil should be put in a sealed container such as a milk jug with a cap and taken to an oil recycling center or a local business that services automobiles. Call first to be sure they will take your used oil.



NEVER DUMP GASOLINE, HERBICIDES, PESTICIDES, PAINTS, SOLVENTS OR OTHER NON-PETROLEUM PRODUCTS IN OIL THAT IS TO BE RECYCLED. Once added, they will permanently contaminate the oil and make it unsuitable for recycling!

TRANSMISSION AND BRAKE FLUID

Transmission and brake fluids are similar to motor oil and can be added to oil for recycling. Contact your local health department, city hall, or MSU Extension county agent for specific disposal recommendations and assistance.

KEROSENE, DIESEL FUELS, LAMP OIL AND FUEL OIL

The best way to dispose of these is to use them for their intended purpose. If you have no use for them, give them to someone who can use them properly.

Very small amounts (1 pint or less) can be added to motor oil for recycling, but this should be done only as a last resort. Never add large quantities to motor oil. This increases the chance that the oil will ignite unexpectedly.

ANTIFREEZE

Antifreeze contains the chemical ethylene glycol, which poses a potential health hazard to humans and animals. Its sweet taste and smell make it attractive to children and pets. It should always be stored out of reach until disposal.

NEVER POUR OLD ANTIFREEZE INTO A POP BOTTLE OR LET IT FORM A PUDDLE IN THE DRIVEWAY.

Antifreeze can pollute ground, surface and drinking water supplies if poured into storm sewers or dumped on the ground.

Some service stations now recycle used antifreeze. Check with local gas stations or radiator repair shops for an antifreeze recycler near you.

If you cannot find anyone to recycle your antifreeze, you may be able to dispose of a **SMALL** amount — up to a quart— of antifreeze by pouring it down the drain with lots of water.

BUT

If you are on a **MUNICIPAL** sewer service, you should call your wastewater treatment plant to be sure the system can handle antifreeze.

If you have a **SEPTIC** system, be aware that antifreeze can overwhelm the organisms in the system. No more than a quart at a time, mixed with generous quantities of water, should be disposed of in one week. For example, if you have four quarts, you would dispose of it over a period of four weeks.

AUTOMOTIVE BATTERIES

Automotive batteries pose a hazard because of the toxicity and corrosiveness of the acid and metals in them. They should be taken to a battery retailer who can send them to a reprocessing facility. These stores are listed in the Yellow Pages under “Batteries- storage-retail.” You may be paid a small amount (50 cents) for the old battery or it may be worth something in trade for a new one. Marine, tractor, lawn mower, motorcycle and other vehicle and equipment batteries should be disposed of in the same manner.



Michigan State University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution. Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age or religion. ■ Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work in agriculture and home economics, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Gail L. Imig, extension director, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1039. ■ All information in these materials is for educational purposes only. References to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by the MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned. This bulletin becomes public property upon publication and may be printed verbatim with credit to MSU. Reprinting cannot be used to endorse or advertise a commercial product or company. ■ Produced by Outreach Communications on recycled stock using vegetable-based inks.