

# DO YOUR PART

DHEC'S OFFICE OF SOLID WASTE REDUCTION & RECYCLING

## Recycle Used Motor Oil

You know what to do. You roll up your sleeves, crawl under the car and get it done. You're one of the millions of do-it-yourselfers (DIYers) across the country that changes your own motor oil.

Do you recycle it? In South Carolina, used motor oil must be recycled. It's the law. If you have your oil changed at a car dealership or quick lube, it is recycled by that business. If you change your own motor oil, you must recycle it.

Never throw used oil in the trash, dump it on the ground or into a lake, river, sewer, septic tank or storm drain. Used motor oil is insoluble and contains heavy metals that can contaminate water supplies and harm ecosystems. It doesn't take much to do a lot of damage. One gallon of used motor oil disposed of improperly can pollute 1 million gallons of drinking water – enough to supply 50 people for a year. One pint can produce an oil slick the size of a football field.

Used motor oil has value. It doesn't wear out, it just gets dirty. The used motor oil you take to a collection site can be recycled into new products, burned for heat or used to generate electricity. In South Carolina, recycling used motor oil is easy and convenient. The state has one of the nation's best and most comprehensive programs targeting DIYers with more than 800 recycling locations that accept

used motor oil. Local governments offer the majority of the recycling locations, but retail outlets such as Advance Auto Parts and Auto Zone also collect used motor oil from DIYers.

Used motor oil filters and bottles also are collected for recycling from DIYers in most counties. Used motor oil filters, like used motor oil, are banned from disposal at municipal solid waste landfills in the state. Recycling used oil filters is important because filters can contain from 4 ounces to 1 quart of oil. In addition, filters can easily be recycled. Used motor oil bottles are important to recycle as well. Bottles can contain as much as 1 ounce of oil that should be recovered for recycling. The plastic bottles can be recycled with other plastic bottles in many local recycling programs.

For more information on where to recycle used motor oil, filters and bottles visit [www.scdhec.gov/environment/lwm/recycle/counties.htm](http://www.scdhec.gov/environment/lwm/recycle/counties.htm) or call the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling (Office) at **1-800-768-7348**. For more information on South Carolina's used motor oil recycling program see the "For Your Information (FYI): Used Motor Oil Recycling" fact sheet at [www.scdhec.gov/environment/lwm/recycle/pubs/used\\_oil\\_recycling.pdf](http://www.scdhec.gov/environment/lwm/recycle/pubs/used_oil_recycling.pdf).

### Don't forget to recycle your antifreeze, batteries and tires.

There's more to recycle than your used motor oil, filters and bottles. DIYers also should recycle antifreeze, batteries and tires. Handled or disposed of improperly, they can pose a risk to your health and the environment.

Antifreeze is accepted in many state recycling programs. Check with your local recycling coordinator to see if it is accepted in your community. If not, your best option may be to check with your car dealer or mechanic to see if they will accept your antifreeze.

Lead-acid batteries (e.g., car and truck batteries) must be recycled in South Carolina. You can recycle your old battery at the retail location where you buy your new battery. There is a \$7 fee added to the cost of the battery to ensure that it is recycled. If you return your old battery

when you buy a new battery, you will receive a \$5 credit and only be charged \$2.

Tires must be recycled in South Carolina. There is a \$2 fee on each new tire sold in the state with a U.S. Department of Transportation number. The fee is used to ensure that your old tires are recycled. You can recycle your old tires at the retail location where you buy your new tires. In addition, all counties have collection programs that accept waste tires (usually about five) at drop-off recycling centers or other locations.

For more information about recycling antifreeze, batteries and tires in your community, visit [www.scdhec.gov/environment/lwm/recycle/counties.htm](http://www.scdhec.gov/environment/lwm/recycle/counties.htm) or call the Office at **1-800-768-7348**.

# Do it yourself? Do it right.

If you change the motor oil in your car, truck, motorcycle, boat, recreational vehicle or lawn mower, be certain to work carefully and recycle the used motor oil, filters and bottles properly. Follow these steps for a clean oil change that prevents pollution and conserves energy for a safer and healthier tomorrow.

## ◆ STEP 1: Drain the oil.

- Drain the used motor oil from the engine's crankcase into a pan. Make sure you have a large enough pan to hold the volume of oil from the engine's crankcase. Many DIYers use a drain pan that serves as both a collection and holding container.
- Drain the used motor oil when the engine is warm to ensure that any sludge flows out smoothly. Caution: the oil will be hot. Keep draining until the flow of oil has slowed to a drip.
- Replace the drain plug. Wipe up any drips.

## ◆ STEP 2: Carefully transfer the used motor oil.

- If not using a drain pan that serves as both a collection and holding container, use a funnel to pour the used motor oil into a clean, leak-proof container with a tight-fitting lid.
- Containers specifically designed to hold used motor oil can be purchased at a local automotive supply store. In addition, certain everyday household containers (e.g., milk jugs) or the original oil bottles can be used.

- Don't put used used motor oil in containers that held chemicals like bleach, pesticides, paint or antifreeze – they can contain residues that contaminate the used motor oil.

- Seal the container and label it as "Used Motor Oil."

## ◆ STEP 3: Drain the oil filter.

- Remove the used oil filter.
- Drain the used oil filter hole-side down into a container to collect the used motor oil for recycling. Allow the filter to drain overnight or for at least 12 hours to remove the used motor oil.
- Place the old filter in a leak-proof container (coffee can with lid or resealable plastic bag). The used oil filter may contain 2 to 8 ounces of used motor oil even when drained.
- Replace the used oil filter with a new one.

## ◆ STEP 4: Take your used oil, oil filters and bottles to a recycling location.

There are more than 800 recycling locations for used motor oil throughout South Carolina including locations in each of the state's 46 counties.

For more information on where to recycle used motor oil, filters and bottles visit [www.scdhec.gov/environment/lwm/recycle/counties.htm](http://www.scdhec.gov/environment/lwm/recycle/counties.htm) or call the Office at **1-800-768-7348**.

## Recycle more than used motor oil.

The following petroleum products are acceptable in used motor oil collection tanks: **power steering, transmission and hydraulic fluid; gear, fuel and heating oil; diesel fuel; and kerosene.**

These products can be mixed with your used motor oil or taken to the collection sites in separate containers.

## Don't mix it.

Never mix antifreeze, brake fluid, gasoline, paint thinner, refrigeration oil, water or any solvents with your used motor oil. Once contaminated with these products, the used motor oil cannot be recycled. Many counties offer separate collection sites for used motor oil/gasoline mixtures. For a site near you visit [www.scdhec.gov/environment/lwm/recycle/counties.htm](http://www.scdhec.gov/environment/lwm/recycle/counties.htm) or call the Office at **1-800-768-7348**.



Office of Solid Waste  
Reduction & Recycling  
**1-800-768-7348 • [www.scdhec.gov/recycle](http://www.scdhec.gov/recycle)**

DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling "DO YOUR PART" fact sheets provide general information on environmental topics. Readers are encouraged to reproduce this material. For more information about solid waste issues, please call **1-800-768-7348** or visit our Web site at [www.scdhec.gov/recycle](http://www.scdhec.gov/recycle). Please send written correspondence to: DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201.