



BMPs

Best Management Practices for Motor Vehicle Recyclers

Solvents & Parts Washers

Solvents and solvent based parts washers offer a quick, easy way to clean grease, oil, and dirt off used parts. Unfortunately, many solvents are flammable, toxic, and emit dangerous vapors, making them harmful to workers and the environment. Most used solvents are hazardous waste regulated under the *N.H. Hazardous Waste Rules*. Additionally, some solvents, like carburetor cleaners, contain ingredients like methylene chloride and acetone that require special handling and, in certain cases, a special permit under the *N.H. Rules Governing the Control of Air Pollution*. Although they can be effective, solvents are costly, dangerous, and highly regulated.

There are several alternatives to solvent-based cleaning. These include water-based cleaners, hot soap washers, steam washing and semi-aqueous cleaners. These cleaners are usually far less toxic than solvents and may not become a hazardous waste when

they are spent. Some types can also be “regenerated” by using absorbents and even bacteria to remove oils and greases. For more information about switching to one of these alternatives, call the NHDES Pollution Prevention Program at (603) 271-6460. In the meantime, if you **MUST** use a solvent for cleaning and degreasing, follow the best management practices listed below.

IMPORTANT!

- Never mix spent solvents with used oil or anything else.
- Stop and think: Do you really need to clean that part? Can you just clean off the heavy dirt and still use it?
- Find out whether you need a permit under the NH Air Toxic Rules for your solvents. Call (603) 271-1370 for more information.

Best Management Practices for Solvents & Parts Washers

- **NEVER** dispose of any solvents or cleaning fluids into drains, on the ground, in the regular trash, or by evaporating to the air.
- Clean only those parts that really need cleaning. *Note: Some motor vehicle recyclers simply **stopped** cleaning parts before offering them for sale...and no one complained!*
- Try “pre-cleaning” heavily soiled parts with a wire brush, paper towel or rag before using a solvent or water-based cleaning step.
- Try using two cleaning stations: (1) A “heavy-dirt” station and (2) a “light-clean” station. Use the light-clean station for parts that are only slightly dirty. Use the heavy-dirt station to pre-clean heavily soiled parts before putting them in the light-clean station. When the solvent in

the light-clean station becomes too soiled, add it to the heavy dirt station. This extends the life of each station, generating less waste.

- Always keep the lid on the parts washer closed to prevent fumes and product from escaping.
- Ask your supplier for the least hazardous solvent you can use.
- If you have a parts washer service contract, have your supplier replace the solvent **only** when it needs it, rather than on a routine schedule. Remember: each time your solvent is replaced you have generated hazardous waste and have to pay for new solvent.
- Make sure you dispose of your spent solvent through a licensed hazardous waste transporter. For information, contact the NHDES Hazardous Waste Assistance Hotline at (603) 271-2942.
- Do not mix waste solvents with your used oil or other fluids. This causes the entire mixture to be regulated as a hazardous waste.
- Do not burn solvent in a used oil furnace.
- Make sure you have a “Safety Data Sheet” (SDS) for each of the solvents you use. Obtain these sheets from the distributor or manufacturer.
- Put warning signs on the cleaning stations and identify what type of solvent is being used.
- Keep parts washers on an impervious surface (for example, concrete) and clean parts over an impervious surface only. Use drip pans to catch spills.
- Never clean parts in a sink that drains to a septic system.
- Clean up solvent spills immediately. Keep spill control equipment nearby.
- Routinely inspect all solvent cleaning stations and waste solvent containers to make sure they are sealed and not leaking.
- Reconsider your need to use solvents to clean parts and seek less hazardous alternatives.

This guide sheet provides general guidance only.

For additional information, contact:

New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
Waste Management Division, N.H. Green Yards Program
29 Hazen Drive, PO Box 95, Concord, NH 03302-0095
(603) 271-2925 fax: (603) 271-2456
nhgreenyards@des.nh.gov



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