

MOTOR OIL

Oil is a valuable but exhaustive resource. Each year in Australia, over 500 million litres of lubricating oils are sold, with over 80% of these recycled (EA). However, this means between 60 and 100 million litres remain unaccounted for. It is likely this oil is stockpiled (such as in sheds), retained in disused vehicles, illegally dumped (for example, in parks or waterways) or placed in household rubbish collections.

Used oils are toxic because they collect hazardous contaminants such as lead, magnesium, arsenic and chlorides used in vehicle engines, transmissions and electrical equipment. When not disposed of correctly, they can seriously pollute land, waterways, groundwater and

the marine environment, in turn posing a risk to community health and safety. One litre of used oil can contaminate up to one million litres of water and is classed as hazardous to the environment. It is also poisonous if swallowed or inhaled, and is a potential fire hazard. By recovering oil to be re-refined or processed into fuel oil, these risks are avoided.

Reference:

Reading Borough Council available at:

<http://www.reading.gov.uk/consumerservices/wasteandrecycling/business/guides/oils.htm>

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Many transfer stations and landfill sites offer waste oil collections. Check with your local council to see if these sites in your area offer this service.
- Environment Australia's Oil Directory lists waste oil drop off stations, collectors and recyclers around Australia at <http://www.oilrecycling.gov.au/recyclers.html>. Waste contractors are also listed in the Yellow Pages.
- Ensure your used motor oil can be recycled by keeping it clean - never add water, paint strippers or thinners, engine coolants or brake fluids to the oil.

MORE INFORMATION

- www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/hazardous/motoroil.htm US site containing great info on how to best manage motor oil and oil filters.
- www.ciwmb.ca.gov/UsedOil/GeneralInfo.htm - how California deals with used oil including some great links.
- www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/waste/oil_index.htm - waste oil management in Europe
- www.evergreenoil.com/enviro.html - interesting oil recycling company site