Greetings!

**Best Practices in Waste Oil Storage and Handling**

Waste oil refers to any petroleum-based or synthetic oil that has been used. It is a by-product that is generated through from maintenance of vehicles and power generators. Waste oil can be generated by tourism accommodation facilities that use petrol or diesel powered generators to produce electricity for their operations, either because they are not connected to the national electricity grid or as a power back-up. During normal use of power generators and vehicle engines, impurities such as dirt or even metal scrapings get mixed with oil, contaminating it such that after some time the oil no longer performs well. This contaminated oil must therefore be replaced with ‘fresh oil’. Waste oil is classified as hazardous waste since it contains harmful compounds that can easily contaminate the environment including soil, groundwater and surface water. This endangers drinking water supplies and aquatic organisms such as fish, if it is just poured directly onto the ground as a means of disposal. Its impacts persist for a long time due to its non-biodegradable nature. Its storage and handling by any facility, is therefore critical for the environment! On this week’s eco
byte, we will describe for you best practices that you should follow in managing the waste oil that you generate.

1. Waste oil storage

If the nature of your operations require that you store the waste oil on-site prior to transportation for recycling, it’s advisable that you apply the following best practices:

✓ Always store your waste oil in leak-proof containers (preferably 200 liters metallic tanks). The metallic drums are preferred because they are made of hard material and cannot be damaged easily compared to plastic jericans (see illustration below)

![Drum](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Drum_ (container)

✓ Store your waste oil in a caged area and away from heat or any sources of ignition and signage is in place. The picture below illustrates the signage that you can use.

Ensure all the containers and tanks are properly labeled as “waste oil” to protect the health and safety of workers and visitors in your premises. This will also prevent any mix-up of used and un-used oil containers.

Do not use a container that was previously used for holding chemicals such as fuels or paint.

Ensure that you do not mix waste oil with other fluids such as petrol or diesel. Mixing them will not only make the waste oil non-recyclable but also very hazardous and flammable.

The storage area should have impermeable surface so that oil does not sip into the soil in case of any accidental spills and leaks.

Source:(https://www.mysafetysign.com/waste-oil-signs-labels)
2. Condition of the storage containers

The container that you use for storing your waste oil should have a tight-fitting lid so that oil does not spill out and also to offer protection against rain water. Waste oil that is contaminated with water is difficult to recycle since very costly processes are needed to separate water from oil before it can be recycled. Always ensure that you keep your containers and tanks in good condition by checking the tanks to see if there are any leaks and if you find leaks, carry out repairs immediately.

3. Oil leaks and spills

When handling oil leaks and spills you should apply the following management practices:

- Ensure you are ready to contain an oil spill or leak whenever it occurs. Containment can be accomplished by erecting a bund wall around the storage area.
- Be careful when transferring oil to avoid accidental spills.
- If a spill or leak occurs, stop the oil from flowing at the source. If you cannot stop the leak, then put the oil in another container or tank.
- Remove and repair or replace the defective tank or container as soon as possible.
- Ensure that all materials such as rags that you use for cleaning up the leaks and spills are managed as hazardous waste and are not disposed of to the environment. This should also include used oil filters.

Other measure that you should implement when storing and handling waste oil in your facility also include:
✓ Maintaining records on day to day operations so that you are always aware of waste oil management in your facility.

✓ Ensuring workers handling waste oil are trained on environmental, health and safety (EHS) issues.
✓ Ensure the workers handling waste oil have appropriate PPE such gloves (oil resistant), boots and overalls.
✓ Ensure the fire extinguishers used in the waste oil storage area are regularly serviced to protect the health and safety of your workers.

Although the greatest challenge faced by eco-rated facilities is the disposal of waste oil that they generate, some facilities have found a solution as the waste oil is immediately taken up for recycling by contractors who service the generators and vehicles. This has reduced the risks of accidental spills and leaks that may have occurred if the waste oil were stored on-site. We hope that you have been enlightened in one way or another and you will strive to apply the best practices that have been highlighted to improve waste oil management in your facility.