

Rutgers Environmental Health and Safety (REHS) Guidance Document

Title: Disposal of Contaminated Rags and Towels (Cloth and Paper)

Revision Date: September 14, 2020

BACKGROUND

This guidance document provides information on how to properly collect, store and dispose of contaminated rags and towels (cloth and paper) which are generated in the following Rutgers departments:

- Facilities
- Housing
- Dining
- Art
- OIT/Printing

Contaminated rags and towels can be classified as either hazardous waste or non-hazardous waste based on the materials they are contaminated with. This guidance offers procedures for handling both types of waste.

Rags and Towels - Hazardous Waste

Rags and towels that are contaminated with solvents such as paint thinners, acetone, alcohols or other similar solvents must be collected and disposed of as hazardous waste. The container must be properly labeled as “Hazardous Waste” (See Fig. 3) while in storage and the contents disposed of by REHS.

- Collection – Rags and towels contaminated with solvents must be stored in drums, pails or red safety cans (See Fig. 1 & 2). REHS can provide drums or pails. These containers must be kept closed when not in use and labeled with the Rutgers Hazardous Waste Label.
- Disposal – Contact REHS for removal and disposal of waste containers. Request a pick-up online at the following link:

<https://halflife.rutgers.edu/forms/hazwaste.php>

Check the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for the cleaner/solvent used on the rags or towels to determine if the component is hazardous. Never assume that the cleaner/solvent is non-hazardous. Contact REHS at (848) 445-2550 if you are uncertain about the proper waste determination.

Note: Substitute non-hazardous solvents/cleaners whenever possible to minimize hazardous waste.

Rags and Towels - Non-Hazardous Waste (Latex Paint)

Rags and towels contaminated with non-hazardous materials such as latex paints and are not contaminated with hazardous materials, may be disposed of in the regular trash. If these rags and towels are suspected to contain any hazardous wastes, call REHS at (848) 445-2550 and a final waste determination will be made.

Used Oil Rags, Towels and Absorbents

Rags, towels and absorbents that are contaminated with used oil or were used to clean up a spill of used oil, must be collected and disposed of as used oil debris. The container must be properly labeled as “Used Oil” (See Fig. 4) while in storage and the contents disposed of by REHS.

- Collection - Rags, towels (cloth and paper) and debris contaminated with used oil (e.g. automotive maintenance operations) must be stored in drums, pails, red safety cans, or plastic bags. REHS can provide containers if needed. The containers must be kept closed when not in use and must be labeled with the Rutgers Used Oil labels. Secondary containment is necessary when liquid is present in the container.
- Disposal – Contact REHS for removal and disposal of waste containers. Submit a pick-up request online at the following link:

<https://halflife.rutgers.edu/forms/hazwaste.php>

Contact REHS for any questions concerning the proper storage and disposal of oil contaminated rags, towels and absorbents, or if you suspect the oily waste may be contaminated with solvents or PCBs.



Fig 1. Drum for rags and towels contaminated with solvents.



Fig. 2. Red can for rags and towels contaminated with solvents.

HAZARDOUS WASTE
(For Satellite Accumulation Areas)
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Chemical Contents: (% vol. or % weight) circle one

_____ %	_____ %
_____ %	_____ %
_____ %	_____ %
_____ %	_____ %

Are heavy metals present? Yes No (If yes, add to chemical contents section)

SAA Manager: _____ Telephone: _____

Campus: _____ Bldg.: _____ Rm#: _____

Have Accumulation Limits Been Exceeded: YES NO (Circle One)

(55-gallons Hazardous Waste and/or 1-Qt Acutely Hazardous Waste)

If yes, please indicate date excess accumulation began: ____/____/____

IN CASE OF EXCESS ACCUMULATION, CONTACT REHS IMMEDIATELY: 848/445-2550






<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 
Ignitable	Toxic	Corrosive	Compressed Gas	Reactive

Fig. 3. Hazardous Waste Label

Used Oil

RUTGERS
Rutgers Environmental
Health and Safety

74 Street 1603, Building 4116
Piscataway NJ, 08854-8037

Campus _____ Bldg. _____ Rm.# _____

Date _____

OUTER CONTAINER LABEL

Fig. 4. Used Oil Label

Call REHS at (848) 445-2550
hazwaste@rutgers.edu