

# AUTOMOBILE SALVAGE YARDS



## Preventing Pollution, an Environmental Fact Sheet



The auto salvage business is one of the best examples of recycling and reuse. The dismantling of vehicles for reusable parts and fluids and the sale of remaining materials as scrap has gone a long way toward lessening the burden on our landfills. However, if not managed properly, the methods used in dismantling and storage can result in serious, negative impacts on the environment.

### INSPECTING INCOMING VEHICLES

Proper vehicle inspection is important, particularly when a vehicle is going to be stored rather than scrapped or crushed. These steps will help reduce environmental pollution by preventing spills.

#### An Environmental Checklist

- ✓ Inspect incoming vehicles for leaks. Engines, radiators, transmissions, fuel tanks and damaged areas should be checked.
- ✓ Place drip pans under leaks (to collect fluids for proper recycling or disposal) until vehicles can be drained.
- ✓ Remove the fuel, antifreeze, oil and battery as soon as possible after vehicles enter the facility.
- ✓ Remove refrigerant (CFCs) as soon as possible after vehicles enter the facility.
- ✓ Drain all fluids from vehicles before crushing.

### WHAT ENVIRONMENTAL RULES APPLY TO AUTO SALVAGE YARDS?

Several environmental rules apply to auto recycling. These rules influence how businesses manage wastes and help protect air and water. The key steps to meet your environmental obligations are:

- Obtain required permits, such as a stormwater discharge permit, a wastewater permit or an air authorization.
- Store, recycle and dispose all wastes (including batteries, tires, refrigerants, oils, oil filters, mercury switches, fuel tanks, residual fuel and antifreeze) to avoid spills or releases.
- Contact the appropriate local officials to determine if local ordinances or zoning affect your operation.
- Use best management practices (BMPs) to ensure a clean and healthy environment. A few tips are listed on page 4 of this fact sheet.

### WATER RULES

All auto recycling facilities classified under Standard Industrial Classification Code 5015 and 5093 must have a stormwater discharge permit. This requires you to take precautions so that oil spills, oil recycling and storage of automotive parts are handled in a way that prevents water pollution. If you have floor drains at your facility, you must know where they discharge. If the drain leads to a sanitary sewer, you must notify the local sewer authority before discharging anything other than sanitary wastewater.

All facilities covered under a stormwater permit must have a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP). These control measures include site-specific best management practices, maintenance plans, inspections, employee training and reporting. For information regarding a stormwater permit, contact the Iowa Department of Natural Resources at 515-281-7017.

#### Environmental tip

Once drained of all fluids, vehicles may be safely stored outdoors without risk of environmental damage. But first, check to see if you are in a floodplain.

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### AIR RULES

The air rules that apply depend on the activities conducted at your site. Activities such as painting, stripping, sandblasting, grinding, degreasing, cutting, shredding, and smelting are common activities that may require an air permit. To see if your facility needs a permit, call the Iowa Department of Natural Resources at 1-877-AIR-IOWA (247-4692).

### WASTE RULES

You must meet requirements for proper storage, handling, transport and disposal of certain wastes, some of which may be considered hazardous.

- **Refrigerant** – to remove refrigerants from automobiles, you must be certified and use certified equipment. Contact the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Stratospheric Ozone Protection Hotline at 800-296-1996 for information about refrigerant recycling. Appliance must be unloaded and stored to prevent the release of any refrigerant or hazard components.
- **Mercury switches** – Facilities must remove mercury convenience switches from vehicles before they are shredded for recycling. End of Life Vehicle Solutions (ELVS) assists auto salvage yards with this task. Facilities will receive \$5 for each switch and these items free of charge:
  - Collection buckets
  - Instructions on locating and removing the switches from the vehicle
  - Instructions on returning filled buckets for processing.



The mercury switch itself is small, about the size of a new acorn.

Once a bucket is full, End of Life Vehicle Solutions will pay for mailing the bucket to an approved processing facility where the mercury will be recycled. For more information on this program, call 877-225-ELVS or send an email to End of Life Vehicle Solutions at [www.elvsolutions.org/](http://www.elvsolutions.org/).

- **Tires** - Stored tires present a fire hazard and may become a breeding ground for mosquitoes. An authorized vehicle recycler, as licensed by the Iowa Department of Transportation, may store up to 3,500 passenger tire equivalents. Tires should be sent for recycling or energy recovery as soon as possible.
- **Batteries** - Lead acid batteries should be taken to a metals recycler. Disposal of lead acid batteries at landfills is prohibited. If batteries are cracked and/or leaking, they need to be placed in a sealable 5 gallon bucket and managed as hazardous waste. Acid from batteries that is spilled on the salvage yard soil could pose a danger of burns from contact on human skin.
- **Drums and containers** - Before the owner/operator of the salvage yard accepts drums or containers, they should be sure that the containers are empty and have been completely cleaned. The salvage yard cannot accept drums containing any type of waste material. Any spills should be cleaned up promptly.

### DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Contact the Iowa Department of Transportation office closest to your site to determine whether you need a screen to block the view of your site from the road. They can also supply information about the proper transfer of vehicle registrations, titles and salvage yard licenses.

Visit their website at [www.iowadot.gov/](http://www.iowadot.gov/)

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### CITY AND COUNTY

City and county regulations can sometimes be more stringent than state or federal laws. The county where your business is located may have its own rules for vector control (insects and rodents) and fire codes. You may also contact the local Chamber of Commerce.

### CONTAMINATED SOIL

A common problem found at vehicle salvage yards is liquids spilled onto the soil during vehicle storage and crushing. Soil contaminated with oils, solvents or other substances should be cleaned up as soon as possible (usually within 24 hours) to avoid possible groundwater contamination and human exposure to toxic substances.

If a spill occurs on site that results in a condition that is hazardous to human health or the environment, the DNR must be notified within 6 hours (515-281-8694). Impacted soil should be tested to determine if it requires special disposal. The proper characterization and disposal of impacted soil is the responsibility of the facility.

### HOW CAN I KEEP A CLEAN YARD?

The most common reason that warrants inspections at a business is a complaint. These complaints are usually associated with bad odors, poor housekeeping, appearance of the property and the release of freon.

Do all that you can to make sure your site is not a nuisance to those around you.

### GOOD HOUSEKEEPING PRACTICES

Simple practices offer a practical, cost-effective way to maintain a clean and orderly facility and prevent potential pollution issues. It includes establishing protocols to reduce the possibilities of mishandling materials or equipment, and training employees in good housekeeping techniques.



Good housekeeping practices must include a schedule for regular pickup and disposal of garbage and waste materials and routine inspections of drums, tanks and containers for leaks and structural conditions.

Practices also include containing and covering garbage, waste materials and debris.

Involving employees in routine monitoring of housekeeping practices has proven to be an effective means of ensuring the continued implementation of these measures.

**S** Store wastes properly

**A**sk about any required permits

**L**earn Best Management Practices

**V**ehicles should be properly drained

**A**lways be aware of spills

**G**et the mercury bucket and get paid!

**E**valuate your wastes prior to disposal

### OTHER INFO

- This fact sheet does not contain all of the regulations or examples of waste handling procedures which apply to salvage yards. Other information may be obtained from the municipality in which the salvage yard is located or from EPA region 7 at: [http://cfpub1.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program\\_id=45](http://cfpub1.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program_id=45)



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### Best Management Practices for Fluids in the Salvage Yard

When working with any kind of vehicle fluid, please consider the following to help reduce waste and keep hazardous substances out of the environment.

If You:	Consider the Risk:	Best Management Practices:
Wash (steam clean) engines or parts	The resulting wastewater is likely to be hazardous from greases, oils and solvents.	Only wash engine and parts if absolutely necessary. Keep wash water separate and evaluate it.
Use of aerosol solvents or other degreasers	These chemicals can compound waste problems by contaminating wash water, sludge or bare ground with hazardous materials.	Put parts to be cleaned on a drip pan, not on the floor. Use a filtered parts washer to clean engine parts and manage the solvent as a hazardous waste. Use non-hazardous aerosols.
Drain vehicle fluids (oil, brake fluid, antifreeze, etc.)	These chemicals can compound waste problems by contaminating wash water, sludge or bare ground with hazardous waste.	Use drip pans under vehicles. Recycle used oils and other fluids. Drain radiators. Recycle waste antifreeze.
Clean shop floors	Hosing the floors down with water or solvent can flush contaminants into the floor drains, groundwater if discharged to septic or wastewater treatment sludge, or possibly causing runoff to the ground.	Keep floors clean to avoid the need to wash. Use dry sweeping absorbents. Reuse them as long as they remain absorbent. Use a designated holding tank to hold wash water if necessary.
Store solvents	Spilled or leaked solvents and their vapors are dangerous and can contaminate the ground soils or your wastewater system.	Keep containers closed at all times when not in use. Store solvents in a flammables cabinet. Do not use solvents near floor drains or on bare ground.
Store waste vehicle fluids out of the weather, secondary containment is preferred.	Many materials used in vehicles can be dangerous and can contaminate soil or your wastewater system. Stormwater rules require they be stored out of the weather and not by floor drain.	Keep waste containers in a separate, covered storage area with no floor drain. Install a curb, berm or good secondary containment system to contain any wastes that may leak from storage containers. Inspect containers for leaks daily or at least weekly.
Accidentally spilled material	Many materials used in vehicles can be dangerous and can contaminate bare ground or your wastewater system.	Clean up or contain spills immediately. Notify DNR spill response at 515-281-8694 if the spill is not contained or may cause harm to humans or the environment. Have the materials needed for spill cleanup on hand and train all employees on how to use them.