



**GREEN
WRENCH**
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

TOOLBOX

NOVEMBER 2018



Attorney General Karl Racine. (Photo by Kea Taylor/Imagine Photography)

DISTRICT OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CRACKS DOWN ON AUTO SHOP POLLUTERS

These businesses flouted the law for far too long, threatening the health and safety of District residents and the Anacostia River. My office is devoting new resources to cracking down on chronic polluters and will take action to stop businesses from violating the District's environmental laws.

- Attorney General Racine

At the request of the Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE), in late August, District of Columbia Attorney General Karl Racine brought a lawsuit against five automotive repair and sale businesses for failing to prevent hazardous pollution, including used motor oil, from entering the environment.

The Office of the Attorney General is seeking hundreds of thousands of dollars in penalties from five defendants in Ward 5, and has asked the court to temporarily shut the businesses down.

The automotive repair shops have a decade-long history of ignoring environmental regulations, allowing used oil to get into the stormwater system, which empties to Hickey Run and the Anacostia River.

Read more about the case at oag.dc.gov/release/ag-racine-sues-automotive-companies-illegal-oil

Both Hickey Run and the Anacostia River have been historically plagued by illegal oil dumping.

This stormwater pollution has been from automotive fluids and other materials that leave a business's property when it rains. The rain washes oil, heavy metals, and other pollutants into stormdrains along our streets and sidewalks that flow directly to District waterbodies.

To help inform your auto shop on its pollution prevention responsibilities, DOEE recommends that shops participate in GreenWrench. The program can help you understand environmental laws and find solutions that work for your operations.

SIGN UP

The GreenWrench Program provides free pollution prevention guidance and training to District auto body and repair shops. GreenWrench services are all free and include:

1. Technical assistance visits
2. Workshops
3. GreenWrench Toolbox Newsletter
4. Certification

Sign up online at doee.dc.gov/service/greenwrench or by calling (202) 645-4231.



DOEE will continue to offer GreenWrench through the fall of 2020, and will expand the program to include new elements.

GROWING GREENWRENCH

The Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) has received an additional two years of support from the US Environmental Protection Agency to grow the scope and scale of the GreenWrench Program.

DOEE launched GreenWrench in 2017, and it will now continue until the fall of 2020, and potentially beyond. The new grant will allow DOEE to expand the program to include training for aspiring mechanics and research into safer chemical alternatives.



Coolants containing propylene glycol are less toxic than those containing ethylene glycol, which is extremely toxic and should be kept away from children and pets. Always contain and clean up spills immediately. Regardless the toxicity level, no coolant should be poured or allowed to enter into any drain. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Nestor Cruz)

SAVE MONEY WITH RECYCLED COOLANTS

Coolants (a mixture of water and antifreeze) can be easily and efficiently recycled, and it's good for the environment and for your finances.

Recycled antifreeze is roughly half the cost of new product, and there is some evidence it performs better because the recycling process removes chlorides. Shops can use machines to recycle onsite or hire a vendor to recycle it for them.

To recycle coolants:

1. Use a drip pan designated as "coolant or anti-freeze only."
2. Keep used coolant as clean and undiluted as possible.
3. Do not mix the coolant with used oil, solvents or other automotive fluids, which could cause it to become a regulated, hazardous waste.

Over-diluted and contaminated coolants cannot be recycled.

Keep a spill kit close by while flushing coolants, and make sure the kit has appropriate absorbent materials. Coolants are not absorbed by the same materials used to control oil spills.

Your spill kit should also be able to clean up a spill from your largest container or source. For example, three 40-pound bags of absorbent material can clean up a spill from a 55-gallon drum.

Recycled coolant can be purchased from recycling companies and is typically delivered in a 55-gallon drum that contains a 50:50 mixture of water and antifreeze, ready for use in vehicles.

Regardless of the toxicity level, no coolant should ever be poured into any drain. Fines for allowing antifreeze to get into a storm drain typically start at \$1,000 per violation.

Growing GreenWrench (continued)

GreenWrench will be expanded to:

1. Provide free, onsite technical assistance in English, Spanish, and Amharic and continue to offer certification, workshops, and newsletters.
2. Allow shops to test and review alternative products, such as non-toxic degreasers and non-lead wheel weights.
3. Work with local technical schools to teach aspiring mechanics about pollution prevention.
4. Save District auto shops over \$100,000 while reducing 230 metric tons of greenhouse gases and 75,000 pounds of hazardous materials.

BURNING WASTE OIL

In the District of Columbia it is illegal for a business to burn waste or used oil for any reason. If you have a used oil burner in your shop, you may use it for heating if you burn only new or “virgin” heating oil in it. To do this, follow the steps below:

1. Have any used or waste oil removed from the tank by a licensed used oil hauler
2. Contact the manufacturer to find out what kind of heating oil the unit can burn. Ask for a copy of the manufacturer’s equipment specifications and a manual for the unit. You will need them for Step 3!
3. Contact the Department of Energy and Environment’s Air Quality Division to determine if a permit is required for your burner if you will be burning virgin oil
 - a. Apply for permit, if needed
 - b. Call or email Stephen Ours at (202) 535-1747 or stephen.ours@dc.gov
4. Hire a company to deliver that kind of heating oil
5. To avoid staff confusion and possible fines from regulatory authorities:
 - a. Permanently cover over any text that says “used oil” or “waste oil”
 - b. Label the tank with the type of oil that **can** be used
6. Keep records of fuel delivery in case an inspector wants proof you are not burning used oil



It is illegal to burn used oil in the District according to local hazardous waste regulations (DC Municipal Regulations, Title 20, Chapter 42, Standards for the Management of Hazardous Waste and Used Oil).



Find products that are safer for your health and the environment at www.epa.gov/saferchoice



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TOOLBOX NEWSLETTER



DID YOU KNOW?

Antifreeze is extremely poisonous and has a sweet smell and taste that children and animals love. Just a mouthful can kill. Never pour antifreeze down the drain or outside, and be careful how you store it.

The best way to managed your used antifreeze is to recycle it. Recycled antifreeze is just as effective as new product, costs less, and is better for the environment.

Learn more about the GreenWrench Program at doee.dc.gov/service/greenwrench.