



Used Oil Filter Recycling A Guide for Auto Repair Shops

FACT SHEET

BACKGROUND

In 2005, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted House Bill 1465 adding oil filters to the list of items banned from landfill disposal in the state. See a copy of the bill at: <http://www.p2pays.org/ref/38/37333.pdf>.

The bill, with an effective date of Oct. 1, 2009, recognizes that oil filters are highly feasible to recycle. HB1465 also reinforces the disposal ban on used motor oil enacted in 1989. Estimates of residual oil in a standard auto filters range from two to eight ounces. If all of the approximate 14.3 million filters generated in North Carolina each year were disposed, they would introduce between 240,000 and 970,000 gallons of oil into landfills. Fortunately, many filters generated in the state are already being recycled, yielding valuable oil and steel resources for industrial use.

MARKETS/COLLECTION SERVICES

The first step in initiating any recycling program is securing a market for the materials. A good initial option in finding a filter market is to request this service from your current oil collection company. The vast majority of oil recyclers offer filter recycling services.

In addition to your current oil recycler, you may also find other markets through a search of the North Carolina Recycling Markets Directory at: <http://www.p2pays.org/DMRM/start.aspx>. As of December 2005, the directory contained more than 20 companies providing oil filter recycling services. In addition to filters and oil, many of these companies also recycle antifreeze and oil absorbents.

The Filter Manufacturers Council offers some important tips on choosing a filter management service, which can be viewed at: <http://www.filtercouncil.org/envinfo/educational/choose.html>.

SETTING UP A COLLECTION PROGRAM

Oil filter collection programs require very little equipment or supplies. Filter recycling companies usually provide barrels for storing collected filters. The Filter Manufacturers Council also provides guidance on collection with its fact sheet "Recycling Oil Filters at the Shop," a copy of which can be found at: <http://www.filtercouncil.org/envinfo/educational/recshop.html>. It is also important to follow established practices of hot-draining oil from filters before recycling them, but collection should be a relatively simple task of making room for a barrel or two within your facility. Ideally, if room allows, the filter barrel should be placed adjacent to the oil collection tank.

PRICES/COST OF OIL FILTER RECYCLING

The main cost in an oil filter recycling program is paying the collection/processing fee for the picked-up filters. Filter recyclers commonly charge by the full container (most often a 55-gallon drum). Below are some ballpark figures that can help determine the costs of filter recycling:

- A full 55-gallon barrel can contain between 250 and 400 filters, depending on the mix of auto,

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truck, farm equipment or other filters, and whether or not the filters are crushed. A full barrel can weigh as much as 450 pounds.

- Recyclers generally charge between \$40-85 to pick up a full barrel of filters. Note: these are general estimates - check specifically with filter recycling companies on their exact charges. Transportation is a factor in determining price.
- Using the general numbers above, a ballpark estimate cost is between 10 and 30 cents per filter to have the materials picked up and processed by a market vendor.
- Most filter recyclers will encourage customers to fill up barrels completely and it is certainly advantageous do so, especially with vendors charging a flat rate per barrel.

CONCLUSION

The ban on the disposal of oil filters in landfills takes effect in Oct. 1, 2009, which allows private garages, oil change companies and fleet managers time to assess their service needs and make arrangements with filter recycling service providers. The recycling of filters will help North Carolina capture thousands of gallons of oil and up to 5,000 tons of steel for economic use. For more information on the filter disposal ban and options for filter recycling, please call DPPEA at (919) 715-6500.



The North Carolina Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance provides free, non-regulatory technical assistance and education on methods to eliminate, reduce, or recycle wastes before they become pollutants or require disposal. Telephone DPPEA at (919) 715-6500 or (800) 763-0136 for assistance with issues in this fact sheet or any of your waste reduction concerns.