

# FAQs for Used Oil Collection Centers

In California, used oil must be managed as a hazardous waste. The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) adopted regulations specific to used oil to maximize the collection and recycling of used oil and protect human health and the environment. Used Oil Collection Centers (UOCC) operating under these standards provide a convenient pathway for used oil generators (small businesses and households) to recycle used oil.

The purpose of this document is to explain the hazardous waste management regulations that apply to operators of Used Oil Collection Centers and small businesses and households transporting used oil to such facilities.

## 1. What is used oil?

“Used oil” is oil that has been refined from crude oil, or any synthetic oil, that has been used, and, as a result of use or as a consequence of extended storage, or spillage, has been contaminated with physical or chemical impurities.

Used oil includes:

- spent lubricating fluids that have been removed from an engine crankcase, transmission, gearbox, or differential of an automobile, bus, truck, vessel, plane, heavy equipment, or machinery powered by an internal combustion engine;
- industrial oils, including compressor, turbine, and bearing oil;
- hydraulic oil;
- metalworking oil;
- refrigeration oil;
- railroad oil draining's; and
- materials that contain free flowing used oil such as undrained used oil filters and absorbents used to clean up oil spills ([Click here for more information on used oil filters](#))

Used oil does not include:

- waste oil that is bottom clean-out waste from virgin fuel storage tanks,
- virgin fuel oil spill cleanups,
- oily wastes that have not been used
- drained used oil filters (i.e., oil filters that do not contain free-flowing used oil)

[Reference: California Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.5, section 25250.1 and section 25250.4]

## **2. What is a Used Oil Collection Center?**

A Used Oil Collection Center is a facility that accepts no more than 55 gallons of used oil from any person that transports their used oil to the facility for consolidation and subsequent recycling. Used Oil Collection Centers include, but are not limited to, household hazardous waste collection facilities, marinas, retail stores, including auto part stores, and local governmental agencies.

[Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4.5, section 66279.1]

## **3. What are the hazardous waste transportation requirements for a person to transport used oil to a Used Oil Collection Center?**

Any person, including a household or business, that self-transportes their used oil to a Used Oil Collection Center is exempted from hazardous waste transportation requirements including the use of a Uniform or Consolidated Hazardous Waste Manifest provided the following conditions are met:

- The person transporting the used oil is the generator of the used oil.
- The person transporting the used oil does not transport greater than 20 gallons of used oil, and does not transport any used oil in any container exceeding 5 gallons in capacity,
  - Exception to this rule: A person may transport greater than 20 gallons of used oil in containers exceeding 5 gallons if the person first contacts the Used Oil Collection Center and verifies that the collection center will accept the used oil. In such instances, the capacity of any single container may not exceed 55 gallons and each shipment of used oil may not exceed 55 gallons.
  - Please note: A Used Oil Collection Center may place smaller container limits than those established by the statute.

[Reference: California Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.5, section 25250.11(b)]

## **4. Is a hazardous waste facility permit required to operate a Used Oil Collection Center?**

A person is exempt from the requirement to obtain a hazardous waste facility permit with respect to any location where used oil is accepted, if certain requirements are met (see question 5 below for more details).

The Unified Program Agency may require a “Consolidated Permit” if the facility uses containers or tanks equal to or larger than 55 gallons to accumulate and store used oil it accepts from the public. For information on Consolidated permits [please contact your local CUPA](#).

[Reference: California Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.5, section 25250.11; California Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.5, section 25404]

## **5. What hazardous waste requirements apply to Used Oil Collection Centers?**

Used Oil Collection Centers are subject to the requirements applicable to generators of hazardous waste as found in [California Code of Regulations, title 22, chapter 12 commencing with section 66262.10](#).

[Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4.5, section 66279.31]

## **6. Since a Used Oil Collection Center is subject to generator standards, does the operator need to determine its generator category (i.e., small quantity generator or large quantity generator)?**

Yes, the operator of a Used Oil Collection Center must determine its generator category to determine which standards to follow when accumulating and storing used oil onsite. This is done by determining the total amount of used oil it accepts from the public each month. If the facility accepts less than 1000 Kg of used oil per month, the facility is considered a small quantity generator and must comply with the small quantity generator standards. If the facility accepts 1000 Kg or more used oil per month, then the facility is considered a large quantity generator and must comply with the large quantity generator standards. For more information on generator standards, [please click here to view DTSC's generator chart](#).

[Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4.5, sections 66262.34(a) and 66262.34(d)]

## **7. If an operator of a Used Oil Collection Center also generates its own hazardous wastes onsite, in addition to the used oil it accepts from others, is the Used Oil Collection Center required to add the total amount of hazardous waste it generates onsite with the amount of use oil accepted from the public to determine its generator category?**

It depends. As a hazardous waste generator, the operator must perform separate calculations for the hazardous wastes its business generates onsite. This calculation must not include any used oil accepted from other generators (i.e., collected from the public). As such, if the operator tracks the volume of used oil accepted from the public separately from the amount of hazardous waste(s) it generates onsite, then the operator may use both amounts individually to determine its generator category. For example, if the operator documents that it accepts only 900 Kg of used oil from the public in a month and also documents that it generates only 200 Kg of its own hazardous wastes onsite for the same period, the operator would only be subject to small quantity generator standards.

If the volume of used oil received from the public and wastes generated onsite are not distinguished and recorded separately, then the total combined volumes must be used to determine its generator category. For example, if the operator accepted 900 kg of used oil from the public in a month, while its business generates 200 kg of hazardous

waste onsite for the same period, but it had no records documenting the different amounts, the operator would be subject to large quantity generator standards.

[Reference: California Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.5, section 25123.3 and California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4.5, sections 66262.34]

**8. Is the operator of Used Oil Collection Center required to obtain a hazardous waste Identification Number?**

Yes, a Used Oil Collection Center must have a hazardous waste Identification Number to accept used oil from the public. Used Oil Collection Centers are subject to the generator standards in Chapter 12 which includes the requirement to obtain a hazardous waste Identification Number.

Please note, if a person has a hazardous waste Identification Number for hazardous waste generated onsite, an additional hazardous Identification Number is not required to operate a Used Oil Collection Center. A single hazardous waste Identification Number may be used for both activities occurring at the site. The Identification Number may be used on either Uniform or Consolidated Hazardous Waste Manifests, when shipping hazardous waste offsite.

[Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4.5, section 66279.31]

**9. May the operator of a Used Oil Collection Center use a single tank or container to accumulate and store used oil collected from the public and used oil generated onsite during the course of their normal business?**

Yes, a single tank or container may be used to accumulate and store used oil accepted from the public as well as used oil generated in the course of their business.

Please note, Used Oil Collection Centers seeking reimbursement for used oil collected from the public must be able to demonstrate, through collection logs or other means, that the used oil being submitted for reimbursement was collected from the public.

[Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4.5, sections 66262.34(a) and 66262.34(d)]

**10. Is an operator of a Used Oil Collection Center required to ship its used oil accepted from the public to a used oil recycling facility under a hazardous waste manifest?**

Yes. A Used Oil Collection Center must use a Uniform or Consolidated Hazardous Waste Manifest to ship used oil it accepts from the public to a used oil recycling facility.

[Reference: California Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.5, sections 25250.24 and 25160.2; 22 CCR 66262.40(a)]

## **11. Who is responsible for administering the requirements applicable to Used Oil Collection Centers?**

The Unified Program Agencies are responsible for administering the requirements applicable to Used Oil Collection Centers.

These local agencies will conduct routine inspections to verify compliance with Used Oil Collection Center requirements, as describe above and, if applicable, compliance with the hazardous waste generator program for other hazardous waste generated onsite.

Inspection report(s) issued by these agencies will clearly indicate which violations and/or observations are related to the Used Oil Collection Center and, if applicable which are related to the hazardous waste generator activities of your business. Please note that as the operator of the Used Oil Collection Center, you are responsible for correction of any violations noted from the operation of the Used Oil Collection Center.

[Reference: California Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.5, section 25404]