

## **CONTAMINATED RAGS & TOWELS DISPOSAL GUIDANCE (CLOTH & PAPER)**

### **BACKGROUND**

This guidance document provides collection, storage and disposal information for contaminated rags and towels (cloth & paper) which are generated in the following University departments:

- Facilities
- Housing
- Dining
- Art
- Reprographics/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 will provide the proper disposal procedures for both types.

### **Rags & Towels - Hazardous Waste**

Rags and towels that are contaminated with solvents such as paint thinners, acetone, alcohols, etc., must be collected, and disposed of as hazardous waste. The container must be properly labeled as “hazardous waste” 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. REHS can provide drums or pails, if needed. These containers must be labeled with the Rutgers Hazardous Waste Label and maintained closed.
- Disposal – Contact REHS for removal and disposal of waste containers. You should request a pick-up online at the following link:

<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~rehs/forms/hazwaste.php>

For situations where the liquid cleaner/solvent component on the rags and towels is unknown, a material safety data sheet (MSDS) should be reviewed to determine if the component is hazardous. Never assume that the cleaner/solvent is non-hazardous. Contact REHS at (732) 445-2550 if you are uncertain about the proper waste determination.

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

### **Rags & 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 regular trash. If these rags and towels are suspected to contain any hazardous wastes, call REHS at (732) 445-2550 and a final waste determination will be made.

## **Used Oil Rags, Towels & Absorbents**

Rags, towels and absorbents that are contaminated with oil or used for an oil spill cleanup must be collected, and disposed of as used oil debris. The container must be properly labeled as “used oil” while in storage and the contents disposed of by REHS.

- Collection: Rags, Towels (cloth and paper), and debris contaminated with oil must be stored in drums, pails, red safety cans, or plastic bags. REHS can provide these containers if needed. These containers must be labeled with the Rutgers Used Oil labels and maintained closed. Secondary containment is necessary when liquid present in the container.
- Disposal – Contact REHS for removal and disposal of waste containers. You must submit a pick-up request online at the following link:  
<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~rehs/forms/hazwaste.php>

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 PCB's, contact REHS at (732) 445-2550.