

OILY WASTE POLLUTION PREVENTION ALTERNATIVES

COMMONLY OBSERVED PRACTICES

Oily wastes commonly generated at vehicle maintenance facilities include used oil dry and, on occasion, disposable shop rags. Once generated, these oily wastes are typically landfilled.

POLLUTION PREVENTION OPTIONS

The use of laundered shop towels (provided by a commercial laundry service) is a pollution prevention alternative to disposable rags and oil absorbents such as oil dry. Using laundered rags to wipe up spills eliminates hazardous waste management concerns associated with characterizing, handling and disposing of oily wastes. Launderable shop rags used to clean up oil spills may also be passed through a wringer to recover excess oil. Any oil recovered may then be managed as used oil. A launderable towel or mop may be used with a nonhazardous detergent/cleaner to remove any remaining sheen from the spill.

COST/BENEFITS

In addition to the environmental and waste management benefits, a number of vehicle maintenance facilities have realized a cost savings following the switch from disposable to launderable rags.

Table 6-1
Cost Comparison
Laundered Shop Towels
vs.
Cloth Disposable Rags and Oil Absorbent

DISPOSABLE RAGS AND OIL ABSORBENT	EXPENSES	LAUNDERED SHOP TOWELS
	Cost per towel	\$0.10
	Number of laundered towels required per week	13
\$0.10	Cost of oil absorbent per pound	
50	Pounds of oil absorbent used per year	
\$0.37	Cost of disposable shop rags per rag	
10	Number of disposable rags required per week	
\$197.40	Annual cost	\$67.60
	Annual Cost Savings	\$129.80

Note:

Savings estimate assumes 30% more laundered towels are needed to replace disposable oil absorbent for spill cleanup.

Table 6-1 presents an example cost comparison between laundered and disposable shop towels. The worksheet provided as Figure 6-1 should be completed to better estimate the cost/benefits associated with using launderable shop towels. A list of commercial towel service companies is provided in Appendix J for assistance with obtaining pricing information.

Figure 6-2 Distillation Parts Washer Unit Cost/Benefit Estimate Worksheet			
ITEM	VARIABLE	EXAMPLE	YOUR FACILITY
A	Estimated number of laundered towels required per week	30	
B	Cost per towel	\$0.10	
C	Annual commercial towel service cost = 52 x A x B	\$156.00	
EXISTING CONDITIONS (12 MONTH)			
D	Cost of oil absorbent per pound	\$0.15	
E	Pounds of oil absorbent used per month	200	
F	Pounds of oil absorbent used per year = 12 x E	2,400	
G	Annual oil absorbent cost = D x F	\$360.00	
H	Number of disposable towels used per month	80	
I	Cost per disposable shop rag per rag	\$0.30	
J	Annual disposable shop rag cost = 12 x H x I	\$288.00	
K	Total annual cost of oily waste = G + J	\$648.00	
RESULTS			
L	ANNUAL SAVINGS WITH LAUNDERED TOWELS = K - C	\$492.00	