

**GUIDELINES ON BEST AVAILABLE
TECHNIQUES AND PROVISIONAL GUIDANCE
ON BEST ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES**

**relevant to Article 5 and Annex C
of the Stockholm Convention on
Persistent Organic Pollutants**

Waste oil refineries



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MAY 2007, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

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**Part III Source category (m):
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■ Summary

Waste oil refineries are listed in Annex C of the Stockholm Convention as a source that has the potential to form and release chemicals listed in Annex C.

For the purpose of this guidance section, waste oils (or used oils) are defined as any petroleum-based, synthetic, or plant- or animal-based oil that has been used. Waste oils may originate from two large sources: industrial waste oils, and vegetable and animal waste oils. Among the industrial waste oils, three main oil streams can be identified: industrial oil (e.g. hydraulic oil, engine lubricant, cutting oil); garage or workshop oil; and transformer oil.

Waste oils have been found to be contaminated with polychlorinated dibenzo-*p*-dioxins, polychlorinated dibenzofurans and polychlorinated biphenyls. At present there is no available evidence that polychlorinated dibenzo-*p*-dioxins and polychlorinated dibenzofurans or polychlorinated biphenyls, are newly formed in waste oil refineries. The data available indicate that the polychlorinated dibenzo-*p*-dioxins and polychlorinated dibenzofurans or polychlorinated biphenyls released from waste oil refineries or waste oil handling and management plants are from industrial, intentional production of polychlorinated biphenyls or chlorobenzenes that are present in the waste oils either by contamination in the synthesis process (of these chemicals) or have become contaminated during the use phase or earlier recycling processes. In this sense, waste oil refineries represent a distribution source of chemicals listed in Annex C rather than a formation source.

According to available information, waste oil management options include reuse or regeneration; thermal cracking; and incineration or use as fuel. It should be noted that dumping and open burning are also practised in many countries.

For information on waste oil disposal in incinerators or on use as fuel, the relevant sections of this guidance document should be consulted (sections V.A Waste incinerators, V.B Cement kilns firing hazardous waste, VI.A Open burning of waste, VI.C Residential combustion sources, and VI.D Fossil fuel-fired utility and industrial boilers).

1. Introduction

Waste oil refineries are listed in Annex C of the Stockholm Convention as a potential source of chemicals listed in Annex C. The information reported about waste oil refineries as sources of polychlorinated dibenzo-*p*-dioxins (PCDD) and polychlorinated dibenzofurans (PCDF) is very limited and further research is needed.

2. Waste oils

Waste oils include any petroleum-based or synthetic oil that has been used. Water, chemicals, metal particles and dirt become mixed in with the oil during use, degrading its properties until it must be replaced by new oil.

New oils are a mixture of a base oil (mineral or synthetic) and additives (15–25%). The type of base oil and additives determine the possibility of regeneration and the possible formation of PCDD/PCDF in waste oil refineries.

3. Occurrence of polychlorinated dibenzo-*p*-dioxins and polychlorinated dibenzofurans (PCDD/PCDF) in used oils

Hagenmaier and Brunner (cited by Fiedler) analyzed new and used (after 10,000 km in cars fuelled with leaded gasoline) motor oils. At a limit of quantification of 0.05 mg/kg per congener, no polychlorinated dibenzo-*p*-dioxins and polychlorinated dibenzofurans could be detected in fresh and used motor oils. However, highly chlorinated polychlorinated dibenzo-*p*-dioxins and polychlorinated dibenzofurans were detected in recycled oils, probably from used oils contaminated with pentachlorophenol and its sodium salt, which in Europe were used in the mineral oil industry. It must

be noted that some of the additives used in modern lubricant oils contain chlorinated compounds and it is necessary to continue monitoring waste oils fed to refineries.

4. Waste oil refineries

Waste oil refineries are designed to produce a base blending oil, some by-products and some wastes. The lighter parts of the by-products may be used as fuel; the heaviest, containing additives and carbonaceous species, may be used as a blending component in road surfaces.

Five technologies are representative of waste oil refineries:

4.1 Vacuum distillation + clay treatment

4.2 Vacuum distillation + chemical treatment

4.3 Hydrogen pretreatment + vacuum distillation

4.4 Thin film evaporation + extraction

4.5 Direct contact hydrogenation (UOP-DCH process)

5. Measures for reduction of polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins (PCDD), polychlorinated dibenzofurans (PCDF) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB)

As previously indicated, PCDD/PCDF and PCB in oil base or residue from waste oil refineries emanate from contaminated waste oils. Therefore, one basic measure to reduce PCDD/PCDF and PCB emissions from such refineries is to only treat waste oils with low PCDD/PCDF and PCB concentrations.

The European Re-refining Industry Association (Groupement Européen de l'Industrie de la Régénération; GEIR) recommend that the following waste oils be preferred for regeneration:

- Engine oils without chlorine;
- Hydraulic oils without chlorine;
- Non-chlorinated mineral diathermic oils.

6. Conclusions

- Waste oils have been found to be contaminated with PCDD, PCDF and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB);
- At present there is no available evidence that PCDD, PCDF and PCB are newly formed in waste oil refineries;
- Waste oil refineries are a distribution source of chemicals listed in Annex C rather than a formation source;
- The waste oil treated in waste oil refineries must have a low content of PCDD, PCDF, PCB and chlorinated additives.

References

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