



Handling Small Petroleum Spills

Whether you're changing the oil in your car, prepping your boat for a day on the water or refueling your lawnmower, using petroleum products is a common aspect of our everyday activities.

Safe use of petroleum products is important for ensuring your own personal safety, as well as environmental safety. If you purchase and use petroleum products such as gasoline, motor oil, kerosene, and lubricating oils keep this fact sheet handy as your quick "how-to" for handling small spills and preventing spills in general. Preventing a spill not only has environmental benefits but may also help to avoid clean up and restoration costs. Make prevention your focus!

How to handle small spills

- ▶ Remember, think safety- petroleum is flammable! Wear gloves, avoid contact and in enclosed areas, open windows for ventilation.
- ▶ If you can safely stop the source of the petroleum spill, do so.
- ▶ If stopping it is not an option, try collecting the petroleum by using a bucket or pan to catch the flow or drip, or contain it by surrounding the spill with a mound of sand or earth to limit spreading.
- ▶ Use absorbent materials like kitty litter, sand or earth to soak up the spill.
- ▶ Use a broom and shovel to clean up petroleum soaked material and then store the material in a container until you have sought advice on disposal options.
- ▶ Never discard petroleum products in a sink, waterway, sewer, drain or on the ground.
- ▶ Once the petroleum is contained, the Department of the Environment and Local Government can advise you on how to dispose of the contaminated materials.
(For events occurring after regular working hours, call 1-800-565-1633.)

How to prevent spills

- ▶ Survey your home to identify any petroleum products you may have, and ensure that they are properly stored in approved containers.
- ▶ Purchase only the amount of the petroleum product you need and avoid storing large quantities.
- ▶ Be sure that your heating oil tank is professionally installed and that it undergoes proper upkeep.
- ▶ To avoid leaks, run gas-powered equipment dry before storing them. Leaving gasoline in idle equipment for longer than a month is not recommended.
- ▶ Avoid gas tank overflows by refraining from topping-up the tank of any gas-powered equipment or recreational vehicle, and always use a funnel to avoid spills during refueling, especially on or near a waterway.
- ▶ Consider having your car-oil changed at your local gas station; preferably one that recycles used oil.
- ▶ You may want to try using non-motorized lawn care and snow removal equipment; a non-motorized boat, and alternative energy sources.
- ▶ Be prepared! Have a plan in place so that if a spill occurs, immediate and specific action can be taken.

If you detect gasoline vapours in your home, it is advised that you leave immediately then call your local Fire Department from another location for advice.