

Reducing Hazardous Waste Generation in the Retail Industry

Waste generated by retail stores that sell consumer products may be subject to the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) regulations. Products that are disposed such as expired or outdated items, over-the-counter medications, products in seasonal packaging, damaged or broken items and medicines may possess any characteristic of a hazardous waste.

Generators must perform proper waste determinations to determine if their waste is hazardous prior to disposal. Please refer to Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 260 through 273 and Arizona Department of Environmental Quality's (ADEQ's) [Managing Hazardous Waste for Small Business Handbook](#)¹.



Examples of retail store products that may become a hazardous waste when disposed include:

- Hydrogen peroxide based hair dyes
- Bleach, ammonia and other cleaning products
- Liquid or solid detergents with bleach alternatives
- Cleaning wipes containing bleach and disinfectants
- Pool cleaners and chlorine tablets
- Air fresheners and room deodorizers
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Pest management products
- Automobile products

How can you reduce hazardous waste generation at your retail store?

By taking simple steps you can reduce the generation of hazardous waste at your retail store. The following is a list of tips on how to reduce your hazardous waste generation:

- Reduce the stock of products containing more toxic ingredients that can cause the item to be managed as a hazardous waste when disposed. Instead stock less toxic alternatives. Such items include:

- * Laundry products (detergents, bleaches, softeners, stain lifting sprays).
- * Hair products (shampoos, conditioners, hair dyes, hair styling products).
- * Cleaning products (dish soaps, floor cleaners, bathroom cleaners, glass cleaners, all-purpose sprays, bleaches and deodorizers among many items).
- * Auto maintenance products
- * Identify less toxic products through [EPA's Safer Choice](#)², [ECO Logo](#)³ or [Green Seal](#)⁴

Labeled products.



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- Reduce the disposal of expired or damaged products by training employees to check shelves often for products close to expiration dates and misplaced products that can become damaged.
- Don't overstock shelves with products to avoid breakage or damage of material.
- Collect and store returned and damaged products correctly to avoid increasing hazardous waste volumes.
 - * For example, don't mix solid waste (non-hazardous waste) with hazardous waste.
- Store waste products by compatibility (e.g. avoid storing bleaches with ammonia or vinegar).
- Avoid using a single bin to store all returns or damaged products.
 - * Damaged or broken products can cause reactions with incompatible items in the same bin.
- Designate return bins for items returned or damaged that must be managed as a hazardous waste.
- Ensure that paint products and paint aisles are monitored to check for leaking, damaged or open containers.
- Inventory each area of your retail store and understand which products do not sell to avoid restocking shelves with a surplus of items.
- Dedicate a few key employees to manage hazardous waste and ensure proper hazardous waste training.
- Track and monitor hazardous waste generated at the store (damage caused by employees or customers in store) versus hazardous waste generated by customer returns to identify the root cause of hazardous waste generation.

For More Information

Visit EPA's [Hazardous Waste Management and the Retail Sector](#)² page to learn about the proposed changes to addressing hazardous waste in the retail sector. The following documents provide additional information:

- [Notice of Availability for Hazardous Waste Management in the Retail Sector](#)⁵.
- [Strategy for Addressing the Retail Sector under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act](#)⁶.

References

The following is a list of resources to assist you in learning more about reducing pharmaceutical waste.

¹ Arizona Department of Environmental Quality - *Managing Hazardous Waste: ADEQ Handbook for Small Business*: <http://legacy.azdeq.gov/environ/waste/hazwaste/download/managehw.pdf>

² EPA's Safer Choice: <https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice>.

³ ECOLogo Product Certification: <http://ulenvironment.com/ecologo#>.

⁴ Green Seal Program: <http://www.greenseal.org/>.

⁵ EPA's Hazardous Waste Management and the Retail Sector: <https://www.epa.gov/hwgenerators/hazardous-waste-management-and-retail-sector>

⁶ Notice of Availability for Hazardous Waste Management in the Retail Sector: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-02-14/pdf/2014-02930.pdf>