

## Solvent Metal Cleaning and Environmental Rules

*If you clean metals with solvents, you may be subject to state and federal environmental requirements for waste management, air pollution control and wastewater disposal. This fact sheet will help you understand some of the environmental requirements that may apply to your company.*

### Parts Washers

Parts washers are commonly used to clean metal parts or components. They include batch and in-line vapor degreasers and cold cleaners that use solvents or aqueous cleaning solutions. Solvents are used to dissolve contaminants such as grease. Some solvents used for metal cleaning include mineral spirits, Stoddard solvent, petroleum naphtha, trichloroethane, trichloroethylene and methylene chloride. Aqueous cleaners utilize water-based solutions to break up and wash away dirt and grease.

### Hazardous Waste Management

Cleaning solutions eventually become spent and no longer clean effectively. When destined for disposal, spent solutions are often considered hazardous waste due to their flammability or due to being listed as a hazardous waste in Ohio's rules. Contaminated aqueous solutions, rags, filters and sludge also can be considered a hazardous waste when destined for disposal. All hazardous waste must be managed properly while it remains at your facility and must be transported by a hazardous waste transporter to a **permitted hazardous waste disposal facility**. For more information about how to evaluate and properly manage your hazardous waste, see, **Ohio EPA's Hazardous Waste Generator Handbook**.

### Air Pollution Permits

Solvent metal cleaning operations are sources of air pollution because they emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Air pollution permits are required for all air pollution sources unless they meet an exemption in Ohio's rules. For example, some solvent cleaning operations may be exempt from air permitting requirements depending on their design, the VOC content of the solvent and how much solvent is used each day.

Batch and in-line cold and vapor cleaning machines that use halogenated solvents may be subject to the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) requirements. These requirements contain emission limits, equipment design standards, work practices and notification requirements for affected machines. For more information about these requirements, see **U.S. EPA's online implementation information**. For more information determining whether you need an air permit, refer to the **Does My Small Business Need an Air Permit** fact sheet.



NOTE: Rags used as part of cleaning processes may be eligible for an exclusion from Ohio's hazardous waste rules if specific conditions are met. More information regarding the exclusion can be found in the **Management of Solvent Contaminated Rags and Wipes** fact sheet.

NOTE: All cleaning operations subject to the NESHAP regulations outlined above and all vapor degreasers are subject to Ohio EPA air permitting regulations.

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## Industrial Wastewater

If your business discharges process wastewater to a municipal sewer (called a publicly owned treatment works (POTW)), be aware that they are not designed to handle wastes like metals, solvents or other chemicals. POTWs are designed to handle sewage-related wastes and wastewater. Because of this, the treatment plant can require that you conduct pretreatment (for example, removal of chemicals, solids, etc.) before discharge. If you are required to pretreat your wastewater, you may need a permit-to-install (PTI) from Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water for the construction of pretreatment units. You will need to obtain permission from the POTW and may also be required to get an indirect discharge permit. For more information, see the [Division of Surface Water's pretreatment webpage](#).

It is not permissible to discharge industrial wastewater on the ground, into storm sewers or on-site septic systems.

## Pollution Prevention

Pollution prevention options for metal cleaning include:

- using aqueous cleaners or specialty cleaning processes;
- using less toxic solvents;
- recycling/reuse of solvents;
- investigating ways to prevent contamination of parts prior to cleaning;
- extending solvent change-out schedules;
- keeping parts washers closed and away from heat; and
- evaluating your minimum cleanliness requirements and washing parts only when necessary.

Ohio EPA recommends that all businesses investigate ways to reduce pollution and conserve energy. Ohio EPA's [Onsite Pollution Prevention Assistance](#) brochure describes services available to help companies identify pollution prevention opportunities.

### P2 can help your company:

- Comply with federal and state regulations and reduce required paperwork;
- Reduce costs by using fewer raw materials;
- Cut waste transportation and disposal costs; and
- Reduce long-term liability and insurance costs.

## Where can I get help?

Ohio EPA's Office of Compliance Assistance and Pollution Prevention is a confidential, non-regulatory office designed to help businesses comply with environmental regulations and permitting requirements. OCAPP can help you determine what you need to do to comply with Ohio EPA's rules. For help, contact OCAPP at (800) 329-7518, or [visit OCAPP's website](#).