

Handling Gasoline, Kerosene, Diesel Oil and Heating Oil from Your Home

Gasoline, kerosene, diesel oil and home heating oil can often be found stored around the house. Each fuel has a different use and different properties. It's important to know how to safely handle and dispose of what you have around the house to protect yourself and the environment.

Each fuel is capable of supporting combustion, which means they can ignite under certain circumstances, so they must be treated with care. All four fuels release vapors that are not only flammable but also can be toxic in enclosed spaces.



If you must handle these fuels, be sure to do so in a space with good ventilation and no ignition source (pilot light, open flame of any kind, electrical spark, hot engine or lighted cigarette, pipe or cigar). Do not store or handle these fuels in the house. Use eye protection and gloves that resist these fuels. Remember, the vapors from these fuels can have toxic effects; so if the smell is strong, stop what you're doing, close the containers and leave the area until the smell dissipates. Reconsider what you were doing and make changes to maintain safety. Always keep these fuels out of the reach of children.

Gasoline

If you buy gasoline for use in small engines (lawnmower, leaf blower, snow blower, generator, etc.), buy no more than you will need for the purpose. Always store gasoline in containers approved for gasoline storage. Be sure the container has a pour spout to avoid spills. Do not fill the container to the point that there is no air space since the gasoline vapor needs a place to expand. Label the storage

What is Flash Point?

The flash point of a material is a good indicator of how likely it is to catch on fire if there is an ignition source nearby. At the flash point, the material will have just enough vapor available to support a flame. The lower the flash point, the more of a fire danger the material is.

Gasoline is the most dangerous with a flash point of about - 45° F. Kerosene is the next most dangerous with a flash point of about 100° F. The flash point for diesel oil and home heating oil is about the same, 125° F.



container to identify its contents, especially if you have mixed oil with the gasoline for a two cycle engine. Do not store the gasoline container in the house or around an ignition source and keep containers out of the reach of children.

At the end of the season, use all the gasoline, if possible, and do not store it for extend periods. Allow the engine to burn up the gasoline in its tank and use whatever is left in the storage can in your car. Gasoline stored for a long time without an added stabilizer can collect water (from condensation), rust and dirt, lose its ability to make engines start easily, and form "varnish" or "gum" in the container, tank or engine. If you clean up a gasoline spill with rags or paper towels, be sure to



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allow the rags or paper towels to remain outside to evaporate all the gasoline before throwing them in the trash.

“Old” gasoline that has been stored for a while can be reconditioned and used. Allow any visible water to settle to the bottom of the container and then pour the gasoline into another container leaving the water behind. Let the water and any residual gasoline evaporate outside before putting gasoline back into the empty container. As an alternate to remove water, you can add “dry gas” as recommended on the “dry gas” label. Remove any dirt or rust by passing the gasoline through several layers of cloth or coffee filters. Allow the cloth or coffee filters to dry outside before disposal in the trash. The reconditioned gasoline can be used by mixing it with fresh gasoline at a rate of 1 part reconditioned gasoline to 5 parts new gasoline. If your engine is fuel injected, be sure to check the manufacturer’s recommendations before using reconditioned gasoline.

If you cannot reuse your gasoline, you need to properly dispose of it. Take it to a local household hazardous waste collection site. See end of this fact sheet for more information.

IMPORTANT

DON’T pour gasoline down the drain, down the storm sewer or on the ground.

DON’T use gasoline to kill weeds around your property. Contaminants from these can move through the soil and contaminate water resources.

Landfills in Ohio will not accept bulk liquid waste, so **DON’T** throw containers of liquids in your trash.

IMPORTANT

DON’T pour kerosene down the drain, down the storm sewer or on the ground.

DON’T use kerosene to kill weeds around your property. Contaminants from these can move through the soil and contaminate water resources.

Landfills in Ohio may will not accept bulk liquid waste, so **DON’T** throw containers of liquids in your trash.

Kerosene

Kerosene is used to supply light for kerosene lamps in emergency situations. It may also be used for cooking in camp stoves or to supply heat in portable stoves. Follow manufacturer’s instructions when using a stove or lamp that burns kerosene. The burning process can release carbon monoxide and be dangerous in an enclosed space.

Always store kerosene in an approved labeled container and keep out of the reach of children. Keep the container tightly closed and stored away from sources of ignition (pilot light, open flame of any kind, electrical spark, hot engine or lighted cigarette, pipe or cigar). If kerosene is stored for an extend period, treat it like old gasoline to remove visible water or dirt as necessary.

If you cannot reuse your kerosene, you need to properly dispose of it. Take it to a local household hazardous waste collection site. See end of this fact sheet for more information.



REUSE

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Diesel Oil

Unless you have a diesel oil fueled backup electric generator or diesel tractor, you will not be likely to store much, if any, diesel oil. But if you do store diesel oil, remember to store it in an approved labeled container, away from ignition sources (pilot light, open flame of any kind, electrical spark, hot engine or lighted cigarette, pipe or cigar). Keep diesel oil out of the reach of children.

Stored diesel oil can collect dirt and rust as well as water. But diesel oil can also support the growth of microorganisms if water is present. These microorganisms can form films that can plug fuel filters and fuel injectors. If you must store diesel oil for extended periods, check with your supplier for a recommended stability additive that contains an antioxidant, biocide and corrosion inhibitor.

The best way to dispose of old diesel oil is to use it the way it was intended. If you can no longer use it, offer your old diesel oil to another owner of a diesel engine. Alternately, contact your supplier and ask if he will take your old diesel oil back.

If you cannot reuse your diesel oil, you need to properly dispose of it. Take it to a local household hazardous waste collection site. See end of this fact sheet for more information.

IMPORTANT

DON'T pour diesel oil down the drain, down the storm sewer or on the ground.

DON'T use diesel oil to kill weeds around your property. Contaminants from these can move through the soil and contaminate water resources.

Landfills in Ohio will not accept bulk liquid waste, so **DON'T** throw containers of liquids in your trash.

IMPORTANT

DON'T pour home heating oil down the drain, down the storm sewer or on the ground.

DON'T use home heating oil to kill weeds around your property. Contaminants from these can move through the soil and contaminate water resources.

Landfills in Ohio will not accept bulk liquid waste, so **DON'T** throw containers of liquids in your trash.

Home Heating Oil

Home heating oil is a major source of residential heat in Ohio. It is usually stored in larger tanks and supply lines are run from the tank to a filter and furnace. The tank, supply lines and furnace should be installed by a professional installer and should be inspected and maintained on a regular basis. A properly maintained tank and supply lines should not have any odor of heating oil. If you smell heating oil, inspect the tank and supply lines for leaks. A leak found early and repaired can save a lot of money in cleanup costs later.

By the way it is used, home heating oil is meant to be stored for extended periods. But water and sludge can collect in the storage tank. Keep the tank close to full to reduce water accumulation from condensation in the summer. Remove sludge on a schedule supplied by your installation professional or oil supplier. If no longer needed, have the tank and supply lines removed by a professional firm. If the tank is steel, the metal can be recycled.

If you cannot reuse your home heating oil, you need to properly dispose of it. Take it to a local household hazardous waste collection site. See end of this fact sheet for more information.

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How Can I Safely Dispose of Fuels from my Home?

If you decide to get rid of your old fuels instead of reconditioning or reusing these, you can drop them off at a household hazardous waste collection site sponsored by your local solid waste district. More information on household hazardous waste disposal, including a list of solid waste management districts and collection events is available through Ohio EPA's website at www.epa.ohio.gov/dsiwm/pages/recycpro.aspx.

Another excellent source of information for recycling your household hazardous wastes, including fuels and other materials, is at www.earth911.org. This website has a lot of information for homeowners and you can search by ZIP code to find recycling options in your area.

Additional Resources

For emergencies or spill, contact the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency at (800) 282-9378.

Gasoline management: www.erie-county-ohio.net/does/recycling/gasoline.shtml

Gasoline reconditioning: www.purdue.edu/dp/envirosoft/housewaste/src/gas.htm

Kerosene information: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/eh/ChemFS/fs/fueloil.htm

Diesel oil information: www.chevron.com/products/tips/fuel-school/

Heating oil information: www.nora-oilheat.org/

General information: www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Family/Homeowners.shtml (Go to Energy, Heating and Cooling Systems)