

Owners of compressed air systems

Compressed air systems are subject to the Hazardous Waste Regulations, introduced in July 2005. These affect all owners of compressed air systems with respect to the proper disposal of compressed air service parts and condensate which will normally be contaminated with oil and other potential harmful substances. See fact sheet No.302 which covers condensate disposal.

The sources of hazardous waste in compressed air systems are:

- Condensate
- Oil from servicing activities
- Used oil filters elements, desiccant, air filter elements
- Air end/pump items
- Gaskets, service parts, etc

Are used desiccants considered hazardous waste?

Yes, unless the desiccant has been used in an oil-free system, then the desiccant will contain oil. The regulations do not specify a lower limit of oil content, so any oil content deems the component to be hazardous. In the case of materials such as Hopcalite, due to its caustic nature it is hazardous at the outset even before use in a compressed air system.

Are biodegradable oils considered hazardous waste?

Yes, even though they are less polluting than standard oil. Regardless of whether an oil complies with the international standard OECD 301B for biodegradability, it is still hazardous waste requiring proper disposal.

How should waste oil from servicing compressed air equipment be disposed of?

All waste oil and oil contaminated components from servicing activities, e.g. oil from the gearbox or sump, filter elements etc, should be removed from a site by a registered "Hazardous Waste Producer" or a licensed "Hazardous Waste Carrier".

How do I check that my supplier complies?

- Ask to see the Hazardous waste carrier / Hazardous waste registration document.
- Ask to see an audit trail of your waste oil for proof that it has been disposed of properly

Must I, as a compressed air distributor, register as a hazardous waste producer?

Yes, in order to take away oil or condensate from your customers' site, you must register, you are a producer of waste oil by virtue of carrying out servicing activities. In turn you should use a proper "licensed carrier" to dispose of the bulk oil from your own premises. Also keep a record of which oil came from which customer site for auditing purposes.

To register as a Hazardous Waste Producer: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/waste/1019330/1217981/1218079/?version=1&lang=e>

See the Environment Agency's website for more information, including storage of oil.

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/444304/444367/1194965/1194985/>

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