



Car Maintenance Part 1: Tips for Using and Recycling Motor Oil

The (now capped) BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill released an estimated 205.8 million gallons of crude oil. In comparison, Americans who change their own motor oil improperly dispose of an estimated **180 million gallons** of used motor oil EVERY YEAR, while only 20 million gallons are recycled! If the 180 million gallons was recycled, it could produce enough energy to power 360,000 homes each year.

Quick lube stations are required to recycle oil, but **if your car leaks oil** you are still contributing to the problem. Get these leaks fixed! Oil on the pavement is carried (by rain) into the storm drains. From there it contaminates our soils and drinking water, and puts added strain on water treatment plants. Nearly **40% of the pollution** in America's waterways is from used motor oil. **One gallon of used motor oil** can contaminate 1 million gallons of fresh water - a year's supply of water for 50 people!

Used motor oil often contains toxic metals such as benzene, lead, arsenic, zinc and cadmium, which seep into water tables if dumped on the ground.

Recycling Oil is Easy

Oregon has the most comprehensive curbside collection program for used motor oil of any state. Simply pour the oil into an unbreakable, see-through container with a screw-on lid such as a milk jug. Leave your used motor oil curbside with other recyclables. Many auto supply stores and gas stations also accept used oil. **Clark County, WA** also has a curbside recycling program for used motor oil.

Similar to glass, used motor oil can be recycled again and again without degrading its quality. So don't be afraid of buying recycled motor oil.* Re-refining used motor oil uses less energy and uses less oil to make recycled products such as lubricating oil. It takes only one-third the energy of refining crude oil to create lubricant quality. It takes 42 gallons of crude oil versus 1 gallon of used motor oil to produce 2.5 quarts of lubricating oil.

Reduce Oil Use with Synthetic Lubricants

Consider using synthetic (man made) lubricants that extend the oil drain interval – the length of time between oil changes. Instead of changing your oil **every 3000 miles**, lubricants save you time and expense by helping reduce overall oil use.* To read some excellent points on synthetic lubricants, visit **Ten Myths About Synthetic Lubrication Oil**. Organizations with **large fleets** have saved thousands of dollars by **switching to synthetics**.

What You Can Do

- You have a voice – and you should exercise your right to use it. Like **Dr. Seuss' Lorax**, speak up when you see injustice against the planet. After all, you live here too.
- Educate your friends and family about the benefits of properly recycling used motor oil.
- Stop drips. Check for oil leaks regularly and fix them promptly. Keep your car tuned to reduce oil use.
- Use cloths or drip pans under your vehicle if you have leaks or are doing engine work. Clean up spills immediately.
- Never dispose of oil or other engine fluids down the storm drain, on the ground or into a ditch.
- Recycle used motor oil. Pour the oil into an unbreakable, see-through container with a screw-on lid such as a milk jug and leave it curbside for recycling. Many auto supply stores and gas stations also accept used oil.
- Buy recycled (re-refined) motor oil to use in your car.*
- Consider synthetic lubricants to extend the time in between oil changes.*

Quick Fact:

Household use of oil in Oregon generates 2.5 million gallons of used oil annually - of this 1.9 million gallons is unaccounted for.

**Always check your owners manual before using recycled oil or synthetic lubricants.*

Watch for **Car Maintenance Part 2: Tips that Save Money and the Environment** in the September Green Matters!