

## Management and Disposal Options for Aerosol Spray Cans



State of Oregon  
Department of  
Environmental  
Quality

**Hazardous Waste**  
700 NE Multnomah St.  
Suite 600  
Portland, OR 97232  
Phone: 503-229-5696  
800-452-4011  
Fax: 503-229-5675  
[www.oregon.gov/DEQ](http://www.oregon.gov/DEQ)

### Purpose

This document provides information to generators to understand how aerosol spray cans are managed and regulated for disposal.

Discarded, aerosol cans are solid wastes and therefore a potential hazardous waste. Due to the construction of an aerosol can and the wide range of potential contents, it can be difficult to determine if a discarded aerosol can is regulated as a hazardous or solid waste.

This document does not apply to generators of household hazardous waste as defined in 40 CFR 261.4(b)(1).

### Discussion

A wide variety of industries use aerosol cans. Some aerosol products such as cleaners, lubricants, paints, solvent and pesticides are hazardous materials and may be hazardous waste when disposed. Many aerosol cans contain highly flammable propellants such as propane or butane. Pressurized cans can also present safety concerns if managed improperly.

### Regulated as hazardous waste

It is the responsibility of the generator to make a hazardous waste determination.

A discarded aerosol can that has not been punctured or drained is a reactive hazardous waste. Its contents may also be a characteristic or listed hazardous. Discarded aerosol spray cans determined to be a hazardous waste, or that are not punctured and emptied must be managed according to applicable hazardous waste management requirements.

### When not regulated as hazardous waste

Aerosol cans that are still in use and contain usable product are not yet considered wastes.

Aerosol cans that are punctured and emptied may be recycled as a solid waste. Most scrap metal recyclers will only accept cans that have been punctured.

Note: Please contact DEQ regarding proper management of aerosol cans containing pesticides.

### Management and Disposal options

Prior to any of the management options below, aerosol cans must be safely stored. Pressurized aerosol cans must be stored in an accumulation container that is in good condition and prevents releases.

1. Manage aerosol spray cans as hazardous waste by shipping waste on a uniform hazardous waste manifest to a permitted treatment, storage and disposal facility.
2. Recycle empty punctured cans as scrap metal. Any puncturing method that releases gases or liquid directly to the environment are prohibited. Commercial can puncturing devices that capture vapors are available and recommended.

After puncturing, the residual liquids must be collected and managed as hazardous waste. Only collect compatible wastes together. Puncturing cans is not considered treatment if the cans are recycled or intended to be recycled as scrap metal.

Note: Conditionally exempt generators may dispose or recycle aerosol cans in accordance with 40 CFR 261.5 (July 1, 2015) which includes sending cans to Metro for puncturing and/or in recycling bins picked up for delivery to a licensed solid waste facility.

### For more information please contact:

Businesses and institutions seeking DEQ technical assistance or having questions about waste management may search the DEQ Web site for 'HW Technical Assistance' or contact the nearest DEQ field office:

- Bend, 541-388-6146
- Eugene, 541-686-7838
- Portland, 503-229-5696
- Salem, 503-378-8240

### Alternative formats

Documents can be provided upon request in an alternate format for individuals with disabilities or in a language other than English for people with limited English skills. To request a document in another format or language, call DEQ in Portland at 503-229-5696, or toll-free in Oregon at 1-800-452-4011, ext. 5696; or email [deqinfo@deq.state.or.us](mailto:deqinfo@deq.state.or.us).