



Hazardous Waste Safety

You may not realize it, but here at Ahern Rentals some of the chemicals and materials we use produce hazardous waste. Your job may not require you to manage hazardous waste. However, for safety reasons, it is important to recognize:

- What hazardous waste is
- How hazardous waste is contained
- How to handle an emergency

What is Hazardous Waste?

US environmental laws describe hazardous waste as something that can cause a significant threat to public health or the environment if it is not managed properly. This includes:

- Treatment
- Storage
- Transport
- Disposal

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA for short) has a list of materials that are identified as hazardous wastes. In addition, waste may be considered hazardous if it exhibits one of the following characteristics:

- Ignitability – This means the waste is considered flammable under certain conditions
- Corrosivity – This means the waste can corrode metals or has a very high or low pH
- Reactivity – This means that the waste can readily explode
- Toxicity – This means that the waste is unsafe or fatal when ingested

Here at Ahern Rentals, the areas that most often produce hazardous waste are paint booths and mechanics' shops. For example, used oil and battery acid are considered hazardous wastes.

Containment

The key to keeping employees safe from the dangers of hazardous waste is proper containment. You'll recognize the containment area by its signage. A main sign identifies the area as a Hazardous Waste Containment Area. In addition, you may see signs for:

- No Smoking
- Safety Goggles Required

For safety reasons you must follow the precautions outlined by these signs.

Hazardous wastes are stored in containment drums. Each drum is marked with a sticker indicating the accumulation start date and the contents of the drum. In addition, all drums must be:

- In good condition (no dents, rust, or cracks)
- Closed at all times except when adding waste
- Compatible with the waste (in other words, the drums should support the waste without being destroyed)

All containment drums are inspected weekly for proper labeling, spills, leaks, and the amount of waste that has accumulated. If you notice any problems at the containment area contact your supervisor immediately. If you have any questions about setting up or managing the containment area call the Director of Risk.

Responding to Emergencies

Emergencies can happen at any time, so it's best to be prepared. The names and numbers of all emergency contacts are posted at the Hazardous Waste Containment Area.

Your Branch Manager notifies the proper emergency responders about the types of waste managed at your location. This ensures that they respond appropriately to any urgent situation.

Finally, be aware of all exits and entrances at your location. Know where to meet during an emergency situation. If you have any questions about emergency preparedness, talk to your supervisor.

While many of us do not work directly with hazardous waste, it is important to know how it is managed and how to respond to an emergency situation. If you have any questions about the management of hazardous waste, call the Director of Risk at (702) 368-6793.

Revision History

Rev.	Date	Change Description & Section	Approver/Contributor/Writer
002	May 5, 2009	Revision upped for second release; no other changes.	Megan Gesing
001	May 1, 2008	Initial Release.	Rene Casas/Abby Rotstein