



Guidelines for Management of Aerosols

Guidelines for Management of Aerosol Cans

Don't throw aerosol cans in the trash. A majority of aerosol cans are dumped in landfills, but they're actually hazardous waste.

Introduction

OSU uses a wide variety of products (cleaners, paints, personal hygiene products, pesticides) that come in aerosol cans (spray cans). Aerosol cans contain both the product and a pressurized propellant. In most cases, these products may have hazardous characteristics, such as ignitability (e.g. paints, lubricants) or toxicity (e.g. pesticides, chlorinated cleaning products). In addition, most propellants are mixtures of ignitable gases, such as propane and butane. Since the aerosol cans are pressurized they present a safety hazard if not properly managed.

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to assist OSU community who generate aerosol can waste with a guideline on accumulation, processing and disposal of aerosol cans and their contents.

Which Aerosol Cans are regulated as Hazardous Waste?

Disposing of a non-empty or "empty" aerosol can in the regular trash can be considered improper disposal of hazardous waste. To ensure compliance with hazardous waste regulations, discarded non-empty or empty aerosol cans should be collected and managed as hazardous wastes.

- A discarded non-empty aerosol can is a hazardous waste if the can and its contents exhibit a hazardous waste characteristic or if it is a listed hazardous waste.
- An "empty" aerosol can, which is not fully depressurized, is regulated as hazardous waste.
- Waste aerosol cans determined to be a hazardous waste or that are not fully depressurized, must be managed according to the University's hazardous waste management requirements.

Which Aerosol Cans are not regulated as Hazardous Waste?

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

How can you help?

- Discarded non-empty or "empty" aerosol cans should be stored in an accumulation container that is in good condition and capable of preventing a release if a can leaks.
- The accumulation container should be closed when not adding or removing cans and labeled as containing waste aerosol cans.
- If you generate waste aerosol cans, please do not dispose of the can in the regular trash.
- If you have any questions or need an accumulation container contact EH&S Hazardous Waste Team at hazardouswaste@oregonstate.edu

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