Minimizing oil use and spills can simplify used oil waste management and help you comply with MPCA regulations.

**Minimizing Oil Use**

**Efficiency**

Cost-effective oil management should include getting the most from the oil you use. Physical testing and wear measurements are now commonly used to evaluate engine lubricant performance, rather than hours of operation or miles driven. Oil evaluation testing will help avoid unnecessary labor and supply expenses and conserve resources. Check with your lubricant supplier about sampling and testing services they provide to help evaluate your oil performance over time. Not only can you chart lubricant performance, you will also better understand the condition of your equipment.

**Leaks**

Chronic leaks can effectively rob you of inventory and can be a source of unwanted and unproductive labor overhead. Preventive maintenance such as tightening fittings or replacing leaky seals and gaskets can minimize cleanup labor and oil replacement costs. Too many leaks may indicate maintenance backlogs that could lead to equipment failure or worker injury.

**Handling**

Use proper tools, such as spigots, elevated collection pans for vehicles on hoists, funnels, and customized hose and fitting assemblies or vacuum transfer equipment when filling and draining equipment. Make sure all employees know and follow proper procedures.

**Curbs**

Sometimes oils are used in less controlled settings, like open machining. Oil escaping from equipment sumps can be trapped on the floor inside a curbed perimeter designed to capture and contain runoff. Consider workplace safety before installing curbs that could cause tripping or falling.

**Oil Spills**

Using the previous ideas will help prevent routine oil waste, but spills, overfills, and leaks will still happen. Even in emergencies, reducing the overall waste generated will benefit your facility.

**Liquid Recovery**

Never add absorbent to a simple liquid spill without using a liquid recovery tool first to recover as much oil as possible. On most surfaces, the majority of the spilled oil can be collected using tools that do not generate additional, costly absorbent wastes. Try the following liquid recovery tools:

- Squeegee and dustpan
- Pans, trays, or mats with collection corners
- Oil-attracting floor mop and wringer bucket
- Properly equipped air-operated shop vacuum

The collected used oil can be emptied into a collection container with a mesh screen to filter out dirt and debris. Recovering spilled oil will minimize the cost of cleanup supplies and disposal.

**Sorbents**

After using liquid recovery tools, clean up the remaining residue with absorbent supplies. Reusable pads and fabrics collect oils, then can be...
wrung out or pressed dry to recover much of the oil as liquid. These supplies can be used repeatedly. Eventually they will wear out and need proper disposal under the used oil rules. Waste sorbents can be burned for energy recovery at permitted facilities or cleaned by approved facilities for reuse.

Sorbents are made from cork, corn cobs, paper, peat, polypropylene, wood fiber, and other materials. They are lightweight, highly absorbent, and many are combustible, which enhances disposal by energy recovery. Sorbents can have significant purchase costs, even with repeated use. In addition, using any kind of absorbent without recovering spilled liquids first will increase labor and disposal costs.

Granular sorbents made from inert, non-compostable materials like clay and diatomaceous earth are also available and can be rejuvenated through washing or extraction processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sorbent Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Granules/Loose</td>
<td>Conforms to tight spaces, potentially more economical when applied appropriately, but can blow around and create cleanup problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pads</td>
<td>Thin squares that are easy to handle and wring out.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pillows</td>
<td>Compact, high-capacity sorbents for small areas, including sewers and floor sumps.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheets, rolls, and blankets</td>
<td>Large or continuous forms of pads.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socks, tubes, snakes, and booms</td>
<td>Cylinders with high absorbing capacity. These can be linked together to increase length. Outdoors these sorbents can be used on active surface water spills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweeps</td>
<td>Long, thin rolls with rope cord threaded through the entire length for positioning and securing in place to contain a spill. Outdoors sweeps are used on calm surface water—often along shorelines.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The table below provides a basic description of available products and typical applications. Consult with your suppliers to determine which product is best suited to your needs.

**For More Information**

Information on sources of sorbents or sorbent services is available in maintenance and trade journals, or through housekeeping and spill supply vendors.