

A Checklist for Auto Repair Shops

This self-audit tool is designed to help auto repair shop owners achieve and maintain regulatory compliance. Municipal health, fire prevention, and building inspectors may also find it useful for preliminary screening and for assisting shops.

The requirements listed here are based on federal environmental and health and safety regulations, as well as nationally recognized fire code. While the checklist includes the primary concerns of regulatory inspections, it is not intended to be a comprehensive statement of compliance requirements.

The regulatory items listed on this form fall into two main categories: those in Section A relate to overall conditions at the site; those in Section B cover specific auto repair shop operations. Section C provides space to comment on any deficiencies observed during an inspection.

Also included with this compliance checklist is a list of tips for preventing pollution, fires, and health and safety hazards. While not required by law, following these practices helps to reduce compliance costs and ensure the well-being of employees.

Check only those items that require remedial action.

Section A: General Walk-Through of Site

1. Materials and Waste Storage & Management

(Including oils, solvents, antifreeze and gasoline)

- Flammable and hazardous liquids are stored in containers that are either approved by the US. Department of Transportation or by the State Fire Marshall, or listed and labeled by the National Registration and Testing Laboratory (UL-listed).
- Lids are tight-fitting and sealed, and bungs are closed.
- Containers, tanks, and flammables cabinets are labeled with the name of the material they hold (for example, waste oil) and the type of hazard they present (e.g., flammable).
- Flammables are stored in an area (such as an air-tight metal cabinet, metal cabinet vented to the outside, or flammables storage room) approved by the local fire department.
- Waste storage area is labeled and limits of area are marked.
- Flammable liquids are grounded and bonded during transfer, and grounded during storage.
- There are no leaks or excessive spillage in chemical or waste storage areas, including around solvent sinks, pumps, pipes, hoses, couplings, fittings, and valves.
- Drums of materials and wastes stored outside of the building have secondary containment (e.g., berms). Otherwise, drums are empty and clean.

2. Building

- Building has two-hour firewalls (two walls of sheetrock or masonry) between repair garage and attached structures.
- Fire doors are equipped with automatic closures.
- All openings in walls and ceilings are sealed.
- A 40BC fire extinguisher is available, with 10BC extinguishers positioned every 50 feet. (Additional extinguishers may be necessary if the building is made of combustible materials.)
- Employees have been trained in the use of fire extinguishers.
- Signs are posted over each extinguisher.
- Aisles and emergency exits are clear, and exit signs are posted over doors.
- Smoking is prohibited where the repair work is done and allowed only in designated areas.
- Electrical receptacles have no open grounds or reverse polarity.
- Circuits are labeled and the circuit box is closed. Access to the circuit box is clear within 5-10 feet.
- Electrical outlets have cover plates. No wires are frayed, damaged, or taped off.
- Wiring is enclosed in Electrical Metallic Tubing (EMT) or rigid metal pipe.
- There is adequate central ventilation and adequate local ventilation for carbon monoxide from tailpipe exhaust systems.
- Lighting is adequate.

3. Floors

- Floor drains are connected to the sewer (with approval from sewer authority) or equipped with an approved oil-water separator or tight tank.
- There are no cracks in the floor that would allow leakage.
- Floors are made of noncombustible material, free of oil and grease, and sealed.

4. General Equipment

- Underground storage tank and above-ground storage tanks are permitted by appropriate state agency or local fire department (as required).
- Waste oil furnaces are permitted by appropriate state agency or local fire department (as required).
- There are no illegal furnaces or space heaters in use.
- Lifts have operable safety locks, and are tested and serviced monthly.
- Electrical cords are intact and have grounding prongs.
- Light bulbs are teflon-coated (rough service).

5. Health & Safety

- The shop has written contingency plans for fire prevention, emergencies, and spill control.
- Spill control materials are available on site.
- Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) are available for all toxic chemicals.
- No food is consumed in the shop area.
- Eyewash and showers providing 15 minutes of continuous flush are available in areas where acids and bases are used.
- Employees are trained in chemical hazard, safety, and emergency preparedness.

Section B: Auto Shop Operations

6. Routine Car Maintenance

(Managing waste oil, oily rags, and absorbents)

- Drained waste fluids such as waste oil, antifreeze, and solvents are stored in separate drums or tanks.
- Waste oil is removed by a licensed transporter or burned on-site in an approved heater.
- Oil filters are punctured and hot drained over waste oil drum for the required amount of time, and then recycled or disposed properly.
- Oily shop rags are placed in sealed, labeled metal containers and are managed properly.
- Oily absorbents are disposed according to state regulations.

7. Solvent Parts Cleaning

- Solvent parts cleaner is closed.
- A licensed transporter picks up and recycles solvents or disposes solvents as hazardous waste.
- Parts cleaner is labeled with material name and hazard type.
- If a flammable solvent is used, the parts cleaner has a fusible link that locks shut in the case of fire.
- Parts cleaner is registered with the state environmental agency (if required).

8. Exhaust System Repair

- Welding/cutting is permitted by the local fire department.
- Compressed gas cylinders are firmly installed by chaining to a portable dolly or to the wall in an upright position.
- Fire extinguishers are available in the welding/cutting area.
- Employees wear protective clothing and welding helmets with shields.
- Flammables are not used or stored nearby.
- Machinery is grounded.
- Local ventilation is adequate.

9. Brake Repair (Grinding drums and turning rotors)

- Employees wear safety glasses with side shields.
- Equipment is bolted into the floor.
- Pullies on the grinder are covered with a safety guard.
- The grinding wheel offset is no greater than 1/8 inch.
- Shop uses HEPA filtered vacuum system or a wet method of grinding to prevent asbestos exposure.

10. Air Conditioner and Radiator Servicing

- Refrigerant recovery machines are licensed by U.S. EPA.
- Refrigerant recovery operators are certified by U.S. EPA.
- Antifreeze is labeled and recycled or disposed properly.
- If radiator repair includes brazing, procedures are in place to control and monitor lead.

11. Battery and Tire Storage

- Batteries are stored in a single layer on pallets or shelving with an impermeable base, and are properly recycled.
- Tires stored outside are covered and properly disposed.

Section C: Deficiencies and Recommended Actions

Use this section to note areas where the shop is out of compliance, and to provide information about how to correct deficiencies or any other comments.

Comments

The information in this document is based on regulations of the National Fire Prevention Code (NFPC), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Compliance with this document does not constitute full compliance with NFPC, OSHA, or US EPA laws and regulations.

Tips for Auto Repair Shops

The practices listed on this sheet provide specific ways to save on compliance costs by preventing environmental pollution and protecting the health and safety of workers.

Section A:

General Site Conditions

Material Storage & Management

Purchasing

- Order chemicals in appropriate amounts. Expired chemicals are costly to dispose and may pose a fire hazard.
- Inspect materials immediately upon delivery for leaks or other damage.
- Purchase multi-purpose materials to reduce the number of hazardous chemicals in the shop.
- Ask your supplier for the least hazardous materials suitable for the job. Review the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) prior to purchase.

Storage

- Organize and label oils, chemicals, and hazardous materials in a single storage area.
- Create an inventory system for oils, chemicals, and hazardous materials. Rotate your inventory.
- Keep unused materials in their original containers.
- Inspect storage areas to identify points where spilled chemicals could enter the environment, such as floor drains, door ways, loading docks, catch basins, dirt or cracked floors. Avoid storing, dispensing or mixing chemicals in these areas.
- Store flammables in a location other than the building where people normally work, in a manner approved by local fire and health departments.

Usage

- Use self-closing spigots and nozzles for dispensing fluids from bulk containers.
- Ask employees to return empty containers, such as, spray cans before they use new supplies.
- Pour and mix chemicals in a well-ventilated area.
- Use only one spray can at a time of brake or carburetor cleaners, lubricants, grease, and sealants.

Building / Floors

- Contract with a fire extinguisher company to test and fill extinguishers once a year.
- Remove overhead items that could cause head injuries.
- Keep floors as dry as possible to prevent falls and potential electrical hazards.
- Use non-hazardous cleaning materials.
- Contract with a waste removal company to empty oil/water separators or tanks at least once a year.
- Seal floor drains, if approved by local authorities.
- Use magnetic covers for drains or dry wells.

Outside of Building

- Ensure that catch basins have oil separators
- Keep catch basin sumps empty and clean.
- Keep wells locked and sealed.

Section B:

Auto Shop Operations

Routine Car Maintenance

Reducing Spills

- Build berms to contain 110% of the volume of the largest container or tank in the storage area.
- Prevent waste oil spills by using drip pans. Place oily parts in the drip pan rather than on the floor.
- Use a resealable funnel to minimize spills from drip pans.

Cleaning Up Spills

- If you do spill waste oil, use dry cleanup methods such as reusable absorbent pads, mops that absorb only oily liquids, or a bristle broom and dustpan. Drain excess oil into drip pans and then into a waste oil drum or tank.
- After using dry cleanup methods, remove any remaining waste oil with rags.
- Use clay absorbents or sawdust only as a last resort. Check with your state environmental agency to find out how to properly dispose or recycle used absorbents.

Solvent Parts Cleaning

- Use aqueous cleaners instead of solvents.
- To avoid drips, position the parts cleaner close to the work station.
- Wear gloves and eye protection when handling solvents.
- Use a wire brush for cleaning before using solvents.
- For very dirty parts, use a pre-wash of used cleaner or wipe with old solvent.
- Remove cleaned parts slowly and allow them to drain over the sink.

Brake Grinding

- Capture metal filings in a bin under the brake grinder and dispose in trash.

Radiator Flushing and Repair

- Reclaim antifreeze on-site.
- Never mix used antifreeze with used oil.

Batteries / Tires / Scrap Metal Parts

- When recharging batteries on-site, store bulk acid in wooden or plastic cabinets.
- Recycle batteries, tires, and scrap metal parts.
- Store batteries inside the shop.

For

Additional Information

Local Resources

Contact your local Fire Department, Board of Health, Building Inspector, Code Enforcement Officer, or Local Emergency Planning Committee.

State Resources

Each state provides free, confidential technical assistance for preventing pollution and meeting waste management and health & safety requirements.

Connecticut

Department of Environmental Protection
Hazardous Waste
Compliance Assistance 860-424-4193
Office of Pollution
Prevention 860-424-3022
Small Business
Assistance Program 860-424-3382
State Fire Marshals Office 860-685-8350
OSHA Consultation Program 860-566-4550

Maine

Department of Environmental Protection
Office of Pollution
Prevention 207-287-7881
Small Business Technical
Assistance Program 800-789-9802
Fire Licensing and
Inspections Unit 207-624-8744
OSHA Consultation Program 207-624-6460

Massachusetts

Department of Environmental Protection
Information Center 617-338-2255
800-462-0444
Office of Technical
Assistance 617-727-3260
Department of Fire Services 978-567-3100
OSHA Consultation Program 617-969-7177

New Hampshire

Department of Environmental Services
Pollution Prevention
Program 800-273-9469
Small Business Technical
Assistance Program 800-837-0656
Fire Marshals Office 603-271-3294
OSHA Consultation Program 603-271-6155

Vermont

Department of Environmental Conservation
Small Business Compliance
Assistance 800-974-9559
Small Business
Development Center 800-464-SBDC
Fire Prevention Division 802-828-2106
OSHA Consultation Program 802-828-2765

Federal Resources

U.S. EPA Region I
New England Environmental
Assistance Team 800-90-NEEAT

For additional copies of this checklist call 800-go-NEEAT.