

DISPOSING OF HAZARDOUS PRINTER WASTE

The printing process creates waste, particularly in the form of inks, emulsions, and the chemicals used to clean them off equipment. Some of this waste is hazardous. As awareness of environmental and safety concerns continue to grow, so does the importance of having a plan for properly disposing of it.

To properly dispose waste may involve using a commercial industry waste disposal service and/or its proprietary products, your own in-house recycling system or, mostly likely, a combination of the two.

Either way, a sound waste disposal strategy begins with knowing the following information:

1. The chemicals you're using and their potential hazards
2. The regulations that apply to disposing of these chemicals
3. The waste disposal options and how they comply with applicable laws and how they meet the needs of your operation.

CHEMICALS

Ink needs to be cleaned off heads, stirring sticks, buckets, etc. Various types of printing and cleaning chemicals exist on the market for this process, some of which are more environmentally friendly and/or recyclable than others.

Factors such as the type and volume of printing you're doing and performance requirements are key considerations in product choice. It's also important to be familiar with the MSDS on inks and chemicals. If you opt to use a waste management service, you will need to provide this information to them.

In most cases, for instance, it is necessary to use a product like an ink degrader that will enable the ink to be removed. The problem is that these products only temporarily break up and dilute the ink, so it washes off rather than truly being "dissolved."

When the tool is rinsed with water, the ink and any other chemicals that have been washed off go down the drain. If this waste water is collected in a tank or container, it re-congeals into sludge.

Every printing operation produces some waste, even if you're recirculating your chemicals. The goal has to be to generate the least amount of waste as possible.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

There are strict regulations governing hazardous waste disposal. It is up to you to learn if and how these rules apply to your operation. You are responsible for the chemicals used in your shop, including their proper disposal.

Some ink cleaners for solvent inks will evaporate quickly and have a low flash point. Ink cleaners with low flash points will need to be disposed of in a flame-safe bin. If you're using these chemicals in volume, find a service to come in and dispose of the chemicals properly.

DISPOSAL OPTIONS

A waste disposal service can facilitate compliance. They will take away liquids and solids and provide you with a manifest letter verifying how your waste is being handled.

Waste containers can be provided by the service or you can buy your own. Again, depending on the rules governing waste disposal in your area, if you're recirculating your own chemicals and putting the solids that settle into drums, there may be local companies that can take them away.

**SEE FULL SAFETY INFORMATION
AND MSDS DOCUMENTS AT**

www.perfectlaser.co.za/ink-safety-documents/

Poisons Information Helpline 0861 555 777