



# FACT SHEET

## Used Oil Filter Recycling Guide for Local Governments and Businesses

### Background

Estimates of residual oil in a standard auto filters range from two to eight ounces. If all of the approximate 14.3 million filters generated in North Carolina each year were disposed, they would introduce between 240,000 and 970,000 gallons of oil into landfills.

In 2005, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted [House Bill 1465](#) adding oil filters to the list of items banned from landfill disposal in the state. The bill, with an effective date of Oct. 1, 2009, recognizes that oil filters are easily recyclable. HB1465 also reinforces the disposal ban on used motor oil enacted in 1989. Fortunately, many filters generated in the state are already being recycled, yielding valuable oil and steel resources for industrial use.

This fact sheet provides guidance to local governments who start and operate oil filter recycling programs, and business, such as automotive shops and fleet centers, that generate oil filters.

### Markets/Collection Services

A good initial option in finding a filter market is to request this service from your current oil collection company as the vast majority of oil recyclers offer filter recycling programs.

In addition to your current oil recycler, you may find other markets through a search of the [North Carolina Recycling Markets Directory](#). As of October 2018, the directory contained 31 companies providing oil filter recycling services. In addition to filters and oil, many of these companies also recycle antifreeze and oil absorbents.

### Prices/Cost of Oil Filter Recycling

Oil filter collection requires very little equipment or supplies. The main cost of an oil filter recycling program is paying the collection/processing fee for the picked-up filters. Filter recycling companies usually provide barrels for storing collected filters and commonly charge by the full container (most often a 55-gallon drum). Below are some ballpark figures that can help determine the costs of filter recycling:

- A full 55-gallon barrel can contain between 250 to 400 filters, depending on the mix of auto, truck, farm equipment or other filters and whether or not the filters are crushed. A full barrel can weigh as much as 450 pounds.
- Recyclers generally charge between \$40 to 85 to pick up a full barrel of filters. Note: these are general estimates; check specifically with filter recycling companies on exact charges. Transportation is a factor in determining prices; it may be worthwhile to coordinate with adjacent communities or businesses to help establish a regional run for the service provider.
- Using the general numbers above, a ballpark estimate cost is between 10 and 30 cents per filter to have the materials picked up and processed by a market vendor.

- Most filter recyclers will encourage customers to fill up barrels completely as vendors charge a flat rate per barrel.

## **Guidance for Local Government Collection Programs**

Local governments will want to set up a site accessible to the public, ideally adjacent to the oil collection area, with some containment in case of possible spills. Potential locations include the local landfill, local transfer station, convenience centers or a permanent household hazardous waste (HHW) facility. Note that filters may also be accepted as part of an HHW collection event. Local governments will have to balance aspects of convenience and cost in determining where and how many filter collection sites to establish. Some communities choose to let the public drop the filter directly into the barrel, while others handle the filters for the service users.

As with any recycling program, public education is key to making it effective. Local governments should use standard educational programs to announce and promote filter recycling, supplementing the effort with local press releases, events or other efforts. Good signage is also very important, both in helping the public find the service and understand how to recycle the filters properly.

The Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS) conducts a grant cycle each year to help fund improvements in local recycling programs. Initiating oil filter collection services is an eligible grant idea. Visit <https://deq.nc.gov/conservation/recycling/local-government-recycling-assistance/grant-programs> for information about DEACS' grant programs for local government.

## **Guidance for Businesses Generating Oil Filters**

Private garages, auto repair shops and “quick lubes” will be expected to adhere to the oil filter disposal ban. Due to the high volume of filters generated, local governments will probably find it difficult and relatively expensive to offer filter recycling services to these businesses. Therefore, private oil filter generators should look to establish their own system for diverting filters from disposal and have them picked up by a recycling service provider.

For additional assistance on oil filter recycling, please contact [Tom Rhodes](#) at (919) 707-8140.