

## Oil Spill Clean Up

There are many causes of oil spills, and the severity of spills vary depending on the situation. However, it is necessary that all spills are responded to in the correct manner to ensure that the environment and water quality are protected, as well as for the safety of human activity. Due to the low biodegrading characteristics of some oils, many spills travel significant distances from the spill site, therefore making clean up more vital<sup>1</sup>. Listed below are spill response actions that the homeowner must take following an automotive oil spill.

### Homeowner Responsibilities

- Use personal protective equipment (gloves, long-sleeved shirt, long pants, boots, and goggles) when cleaning up a spill and when handling hazardous materials<sup>2</sup>.
- Contain the spill<sup>3</sup>. Attempt to contain the oil through two options: construct a barrier surrounding the spill, and cover the area with an absorbent material such as cat litter or sawdust
- Use a plastic tarp outside to organize objects that require cleaning.
- If the spill enters town grounds or a municipal drain, contact your local municipal works department<sup>4</sup>.
- Avoid spilling gasoline on the ground, especially near wells and other waterbodies. If any spill occurs near a well and your water has a strange, oily odor or consistency, do not drink it<sup>5</sup>. Contact your local authorities.
- Dispose of waste oil and gasoline properly. Contact your local authorities to find out more information about disposal in your area.
- After cleanup is completed, thoroughly bathe yourself and launder clothes to ensure your personal safety.

For more information visit: <https://health.ny.gov/publications/2752.pdf>

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<sup>1</sup> New York State. "Spill Response and Remediation FAQ". Retrieved May 15, 2020. <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8692.html>

<sup>2</sup> New York State. "What Homeowners Need to Know about Fuel Oil Spills and Flooding". Retrieved May 15, 2020. <https://health.ny.gov/publications/2752.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Nova Scotia. 2017. "Fact Sheet for Homeowners". Dec 10, 2017. Retrieved May 14, 2020. <https://novascotia.ca/nse/contaminatedsites/oilspillfactsheet.asp>

<sup>4</sup> Nova Scotia. 2017. "Fact Sheet for Homeowners". Dec 10, 2017. Retrieved May 14, 2020. <https://novascotia.ca/nse/contaminatedsites/oilspillfactsheet.asp>

<sup>5</sup> New York State. "What Homeowners Need to Know about Fuel Oil Spills and Flooding". Retrieved May 15, 2020. <https://health.ny.gov/publications/2752.pdf>