

Chemical Waste

INTRODUCTION

Chemical products are subject to a variety of legislation governing the disposal and treatment of waste. Waste packaging is also impacted where it may be contaminated by hazardous chemicals. A certain amount of the information required to determine how waste chemical product should be managed is provided in Section 13 of the Safety Data Sheet (SDS), but due to the fact that many local regulations apply, it is not possible to provide full guidance there. This guidance document answers the most common questions asked about the disposal of waste chemical products and their packaging.

1. What waste can I dispose to drain?

These days, the amount and type of chemical wastes that can be disposed to drain is very limited, as international, national and local regulations often apply and strict limitations are imposed on businesses regarding which chemicals can be disposed of and in what quantities. In some countries haul-away is the only option for all chemical wastes from commercial operations.

Always refer to the most recent Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for the specific product in question. The SDS can be downloaded easily from www.kodak.com/go/msds by providing the product code (normally a 7-digit catalogue number) or a product description (eg. "plate developer"). The SDS provides information about waste and waste disposal in Section 13.

If the waste is hazardous then it must usually be disposed of by an authorised contractor. If the waste is not described as hazardous then it may be possible to dispose to drain, but care must be taken to ensure any local requirements are met.

In the EU, Commission Decision 2001/118/EC sets out the determination of waste categories. This legislation describes a series of European Waste Catalogue (EWC) codes and the rules by which it is determined which category any particular type of waste falls into. For example, wastes from the photographic industry have a set of codes beginning with 09, such as "09 01 01 water-based developer and activator solutions". The codes are divided into hazardous and non-hazardous categories. Hazardous waste disposal must be conducted by an authorised contractor. For waste which falls into a non-hazardous EWC category, it may be possible to dispose of the waste without restrictions, but since further national and local requirements may also apply, including limits placed on businesses by water treatment companies, it is outside the scope of this document to provide a comprehensive guide for all circumstances.

2. How can I find an authorised contractor to manage my waste?

Local business directories and local authorities will often be able to provide contact details for waste contractors. In the past, Kodak offered a waste recovery service for certain types of chemicals, however this is no longer the case.

3. Does waste from used and unused chemicals have to be handled differently?

In some cases, yes. As a general rule, if a chemical product is classified as hazardous as described in Sections 2 and 15 of the SDS, then the waste is automatically classified as hazardous as well (although some exceptions to this exist). So for these hazardous products, used chemicals and unused old stock for disposal must both be disposed of through an authorised contractor.

There are other products which are not classified as hazardous, in which case the unused product, such as old stock, is considered as non-hazardous waste and can be disposed of accordingly. However, if the product is used, the waste chemicals may well fall under a hazardous waste code, as during the use of the product, such as during photographic processing, the chemical content of the processing solution changes. Refer to the SDS to see if this is the case with your product.

4. What about waste packaging or other items such as ink cartridges?

Waste packaging of chemical products has to be assessed to determine if it is contaminated with hazardous waste or not. If it is, it must be disposed of through an authorised contractor. If it is not, then it can be disposed of as non-hazardous waste. Containers such as bottles and plastic packaging that are washed sufficiently can be disposed of as non-hazardous waste. It is generally recommended to rinse the container three times to ensure sufficient removal of hazardous contents – if the product has to be diluted before use, then the rinse can be used to make up the final working solution.

An additional point to consider is that in some countries, a packaging take-back scheme is operated in accordance with national legislation. This places a requirement on the supplier and/or user to ensure waste packaging goes to the appointed collector.

Voluntary schemes also operate in some sectors, where it is possible, and recommended, to send products such as ink cartridges for recycling rather than disposing of them in other ways. See your local supplier for details of such schemes, which vary by country and by product type.