

Thin-spreading small quantities of petroleum-contaminated soils

This guidance is for small quantities — 10 cubic yards or less — of soil or other organic materials from a petroleum spill that has been approved by Minnesota Pollution Control Agency staff. The MPCA has rules for sites that accept volumes up to 1,500 cubic yards of petroleum-contaminated soil, and the agency requires a permit for the ongoing land treatment of large quantities.

The following conditions must be met to thin-spread petroleum-contaminated soils or other MPCA staff-approved materials. If these conditions are not met, approval is automatically revoked. Approval is given verbally by the MPCA Emergency Management Unit. It is the responsibility of the spiller to ensure an adequate cleanup and disposal has occurred.

Storage

Material stored prior to thin-spreading should be placed in barrels or on an impervious surface and covered with plastic.

Permission from landowner

Before thin-spread the contaminated soil, you must get permission to do so from the property owner.

Local and county ordinances

Check with the local units of government to see if there are any ordinances or regulations pertaining to thin-spreading. Observe all that are applicable.

Township notification/approval

If soil will be thin-spread in a different township than where it originated, the receiving township must be given 60 days to review the application or request and provide a recommendation to the MPCA staff. This applies to organized and unorganized townships receiving petroleum-contaminated soil generated outside their borders. It does not apply to cities or thin-spreading within the same township where the material was generated.

Site conditions

The application site must be in a relatively isolated area with setback distances of 200 feet from surface waters, drinking water wells and sewers. The soil should have moderate-to-high fertility and the land slope should be less than 6 percent.

Timing

Application of the material can occur only between April 1 and November 1.

Application

The material must be applied at a maximum thickness of two inches. After application, the material must be worked into the native soil by disking, raking, blading or equivalent methods.

The application site must be observed for visual contamination for a minimum of one year or until biodegradation has occurred.

Except for used oil, waste generated from petroleum spills that have been reported and cleaned up immediately are exempt from Minnesota's Hazardous Waste Rules.

For more information

For more information on spill reporting, prevention, cleanup and disposal, call the MPCA at 651-296-6300 or 800-657-3864 and ask for a member of the Emergency Management Unit Team or visit <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/emergency-response>.

More information is also available on the website of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at www.epa.gov/oilspill/.