

Important Note: The following text is excerpted directly from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's publication, *Environmental Compliance, Pollution Prevention, and Self Assessment Guide for the Marina Industry*. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Pollution Prevention Unit. March 2003. The only changes that have been made are the addition of links to pertinent resources or regulations and Editor's Notes, where appropriate.

Shop Towels

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Industrial rags (also known as shop towels) or soiled clothing contaminated with listed or characteristic hazardous wastes do not have to be managed as hazardous wastes when they are sent to a commercial or noncommercial laundry or dry cleaner. The following conditions must be met:

- There is no exemption for rags or soiled clothing contaminated beyond saturation (containing free liquids). Any rags or soiled clothing containing free liquids are subject to full DEC hazardous waste regulation.
- Rag and soiled clothing must be managed in accordance with [6 NYCRR Part 372](http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/regs/part372.html) [http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/regs/part372.html](http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/regs/subpart373_01a.html) and [Subpart 373-1](http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/regs/subpart373_01a.html) http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/regs/subpart373_01a.html until the materials are sent for laundering and counted as wastes generated and accumulated for the purpose of determining generator category. If you are required to submit an annual report to DEC, you must report all rags as hazardous rags in this report.
- All rags and soiled clothing that contain flammable materials must be stored and transported in fireproof containers.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Here are some tips on managing your shop towels:

- Send your shop towels to a laundry or dry cleaning service. You only have to manage your shop towels in accordance with the hazardous waste regulations until they leave your shop.
- If your facility is large enough, you may consider purchasing a centrifuge to collect and recycle excess solvent from your shop towels. Most laundries will not accept saturated shop towels. Centrifuges may be costly, which would not make this a cost-effective purchase for small businesses.
- Store your shop towels in metal safety cans to reduce the risk of fire. If your shop towels contain solvents, they should be stored in a double-bottom drum to allow the solvent to drip where it can be collected.