

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR  
SEPARATOR WATER DISPOSAL  
FROM  
PERCHLOROETHYLENE (PERC) DRY CLEANING MACHINES

The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide you, the owner/operator, with guidance for managing and disposing of separator water generated in the normal operation of your perc dry cleaning machines.

Separator water with a perc concentration of 0.7 parts per million (ppm) or more is considered to be hazardous waste. Separator water accumulated in a properly operated perc/water separator contains perc at concentrations up to 150 ppm, and therefore, is a hazardous waste.

To minimize the amount of perc in your separator water, you should maintain and operate the water separator as recommended by the manufacturer, including keeping it clean and operated within the proper temperature range. A well maintained water separator minimizes the exposure of your customers, staff and the environment to a toxic chemical.

There are two basic options for disposal of separator water:

1. Store your separator water in drum(s)/container(s) with a tight fitting lid(s), label as *Hazardous Waste*, Separator Water, Toxic and with the date accumulation began in the container(s) and ship them to a licensed treatment, storage and disposal (TSD) facility (310 CMR 30.000).
2. Evaporate the separator water. *Please Note:* The Department's Hazardous Waste regulations prohibit heating unfiltered (not passed through a carbon filter) separator water. (310 CMR 30.353(10))

Best management practices when evaporating separator water

- The use of a “mister” is not recommended.
- None of the perc recovered in the separator can be evaporated. A properly operated and maintained separator will eliminate this worry.

- An evaporator equipped with carbon filters in series to reduce the perc concentration in the wastewater to below the level of hazardous waste prior to evaporation is recommended.
  - > To minimize spills, vapor odors, and to simplify the process, the water separator should be hard-piped to the evaporator, if feasible. Small quantity generators (SQG) are required to hard-pipe the separator to the evaporator.
  - > If the water separator is not hard-piped to the evaporator, the container used to collect separator water must be kept closed and labeled as “Perc Separator Water”. You must be careful not to spill separator water when transferring it to the evaporator.
- The evaporator should be vented to the outdoor air, not indoors.
  - > The evaporator should be vented as high into the outside air as feasible. A well designed stack will allow for effective dispersion of the vapors.
  - > Do not vent the evaporator near a window or air intake of the facility or an adjacent building.
- Spent carbon filters from the evaporator must be stored and shipped as hazardous waste (310 CMR 30.000).
- Keep records of the maintenance, repairs and filter changes to the evaporator to show you are operating and maintaining the unit in accordance with the manufacturer’s requirements.