

# Used Tires

Your guide to handling used tires at transfer stations on Tribal lands.

## What are the risks associated with used tires?

Used tires (or waste tires) are those no longer suitable for their intended purpose due to wear or damage. Used tires must be carefully managed. Due to their heavy metal and other pollutant content, improperly stored used tires may leach toxins into groundwater or stormwater.

Used tires can also enable the spread of disease, as stagnant rainwater collecting inside tires creates a breeding ground for mosquitos and other pests. Accumulations of used tires also create a dangerous fire hazard with potential to emit polluting tire smoke. Tire rubber is highly flammable, making fires involving tire piles extremely difficult to extinguish and more likely to require federal emergency response.

## Handling and Storage

Best practices for the handling and storage of used tires include:

- ✓ Shield tires stored outside with a plastic tarp or cover to minimize water collection and prevent creating habitats for breeding mosquitos.
- ✓ Limit the size of tire piles and move tires off site as soon as you accumulate a full load.
- ✓ Store tires away from other combustible materials.
- ✓ Have an emergency plan in case of a fire. For example, have on-site equipment, cover material, and other supplies, including water, sufficient to control a fire until the nearest fire department can arrive.



Stagnant rainwater collecting in a tire

Some states require permits to store used tires above a certain quantity. If your transfer station is not on Tribal trust land, check with your state on potential permits or fees for storing used tires.

Unfortunately, illegal dumping of used tires is a common practice. You can prevent illegal dumping by restricting access to the transfer station during unstaffed hours, providing alternatives for low-cost disposal, and educating your community on the risks.

## Transport

Some states require people to register as a waste tire hauler prior to transporting a certain number of used tires at a time. Check your state requirements to determine if you are subject to registration. For example, California state law requires every person who transports 10 or more used tires at a time to register as a tire hauler.

## Recycling and Disposal

The best way to dispose of used tires is to seek out a tire recycler. Used tires can be repurposed in a variety of ways, such as:

- ✓ Gravel replacement for roads
- ✓ Traffic safety barricades
- ✓ Roof shingles
- ✓ Running tracks
- ✓ Artificial turf
- ✓ Landfill covers
- ✓ Civil engineering projects

Tire recycling programs vary by state. Some counties conduct used tire collection events for recycling and local municipalities may schedule pickups.

Earth 911 can help you locate a local tire shredder or recycling center. Visit the [Earth 911 website](#) or call their nationwide automated hotline at 1-800-CLEANUP.

Many states banned tires in landfills due to the amount of tire waste accumulation and the toxic chemicals they contain. Tires in landfills often resurfaced as trapped methane gases cause the tires to become buoyant and rise to the surface. Some landfills require used tires to first be shredded or cut. Other landfills charge extra fees for used tire handling. Check with your local landfills for their rules and fees to dispose of used tires.

## State Requirements & Grants

Used tires are managed primarily at the state level. Forty-eight states have laws or regulations specifically dealing with the management of scrap tires. Tribes must follow state law for wastes transported to a collection facility off Tribal lands. Contact your state's environmental agency to determine the best course of action.

Many states have tire grant programs designed to reduce the number of used tires in landfills, eliminate stockpiling, and address abandoned tires. For example, CalRecycle's Waste Tire Cleanup (TCU) and Waste Tire Amnesty (TA) grant programs fund the cost of cleanup, abatement, and other remedial actions to dispose of used tires collected at cleanup projects and amnesty events. TCU and TA offer these grants every other year, and Tribes are encouraged to apply.

## Tire Rims

Rims can be recycled with scrap metal but, due to the added cost and effort of removing rims, you may pay double for special handling. Many recyclers do not accept tires with rims as safely removing the rims requires specialized equipment often found at auto shops. Rims may be removed by cutting the tire and prying out the rim. **Do not** use a saw or torch to avoid igniting the tire and creating a significant safety hazard. Wheel weights that contain lead or other metals may cause water pollution and require specialized disposal (typically as scrap metal or regulated hazardous waste).

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