
Olympic College Automotive

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“The EnviroStars recognition links environmental responsibility to our primary task of training student technicians.”

--Mark Ditlefsen, Senior Faculty

Olympic College Automotive Technology has earned the top EnviroStars award – 5 stars – for its environmentally progressive automotive repair education program.

The program has reduced its hazardous waste to nearly zero. Water-based cleaning methods are used for cleaning parts and brakes, thus eliminating solvent use and hazardous solvent waste. Faculty and students pre-screen jobs to block potentially hazardous materials and situations from entering the facility. To account for environmental costs, they charge the customer for materials such as aerosols, and the excess is given to the customer. This practice keeps the waste out of the shop.

Instead of disposing or recycling waste oil, the facility burns it in a certified waste oil heater, which is employed as the principal heat source. Waste oil heaters are a great way to reduce waste and conserve energy at the same time.

The shop also recycles antifreeze, freon refrigerants (from air conditioning systems), and fluorescent tubes, as well as scrap metal and other solid wastes.



Students pose with the “Kit Car” at Olympic College Automotive Technology

Because learning is the focus of the automotive program, students are encouraged to participate in decision-making regarding pollution prevention and current technologies. As Mark Ditlefsen, Senior Faculty member, says, “We constantly are revising our curriculum to include best practices, and we call upon students to help develop methods to improve our program’s successes.”

With its progressive teaching practices, Olympic College Automotive Technology is helping to protect the environment by training future mechanics to be conscientious citizens and industry leaders.