



Stormwater Management

for Auto Servicing and Mechanical Repair Workshops

EPA 493/03

Why do auto workshops need this information?

This information for owners and staff of auto servicing and mechanical repair workshops aims to increase your stormwater management awareness and strengthen your knowledge. It will help you to manage potential stormwater pollution problems at your auto workshop.

What is stormwater?

Stormwater is rainwater that flows across outside surfaces into stormwater drains and gutters in the street. The water is not treated and flows directly to our creeks, rivers, groundwaters and oceans. Stormwater should only contain clean rainwater, and *no* pollutants such as general rubbish, industrial waste, heavy metals, oils and greases.

Benefits for you and your business

By addressing potential stormwater pollution problems at your workplace, you:

- minimise your potential for environmental fines and prosecutions
- demonstrate compliance with the Environment Protection Authority's codes of practice
- improve your businesses profile
- make long-term cost savings by increasing efficiency and reducing costs
- increase customer patronage
- improve environmental conditions for everyone.

What legislation governs stormwater pollution?

The stormwater system is protected by a number of different laws including the *Environment Protection Act 1993*, the *Environment Protection (Water Quality) Policy 2003* (the Water Quality Policy), the *Local Government Act 1934*, the *Development Act 1993* and the *Public and Environmental Health Act 1987*.

The new Water Quality Policy offers the most specific protection for the state's waters. It prohibits the pollution of the stormwater system and our natural waters. The Policy has general obligations which every person, business and industry must comply with as well as specific obligations for particular activities. Failure to comply with any of these obligations may result in the issuing of a \$300 fine, Environment Protection Order, and/or prosecution.

Clause 17 of the Water Quality Policy states that a person must not discharge or deposit a pollutant listed in Schedule 4 of the Policy into any waters or onto land where it might enter any waters. The pollutants listed in Schedule 4 which relate to auto servicing include: cleaning agents, detergents and their by-products; engine coolant; fuel dispensing area washwater; hard waste (e.g. vehicles, tyres, batteries, metal parts, piping); motor vehicle servicing or repair waste; oil, grease, lubricants and petroleum products; rubbish; and solvents.

For more information on the Water Quality Policy visit the EPA web site at www.epa.sa.gov.au, or telephone (08) 8204 2004.

What can you do to stop stormwater pollution?

Many activities of auto workshops can pollute stormwater.

The first step is to ensure that stormwater does not get contaminated. Think about all your work practices and ensure that none lead to contamination of water that will run out into stormwater drains. Think about the uncovered areas of your workplace—when it rains will the rainwater become contaminated before it gets to the stormwater drain?

Oils and grease are the most common pollutants discharged from auto workshops into the stormwater system. Under the new Water Quality Policy you could be fined for discharging oil and grease into any waters or depositing it on land where it might enter waters. Any discharges to the sewer must be in accordance with the requirements of the SA Water Trade Wastes section—telephone (08) 8207 1350, fax (08) 8207 1361.

Preventing stormwater pollution

- Prevent any washing water from entering stormwater drains. Detergents usually contain phosphates which, when transported through the stormwater system, cause problems in our waterways such as excess algal growth, toxic algal blooms and reduced oxygen levels for aquatic organisms. Confine your washing and cleaning to a contained or bunded area (raised edge) where the wastewater is directed to the sewer.
- Using biodegradable phosphate detergents is only of benefit to the environment if detergent wastewater is directed to the sewage system and the treated effluent is re-used to grow plants.
- Wash vehicles and parts only in an approved wash bay. (Discuss alternatives with the Trade Wastes section of SA Water, who will provide you with technical advice and options for appropriately collecting, storing and disposing of liquid wastes.) If washdown water from vehicles cannot be disposed of to the sewer it must be stored and removed by a liquid waste contractor.
- Do not hose the work floor or forecourt unless all water is collected and directed through an approved trade waste system. Try sweeping or vacuuming the area—use absorbent materials to remove most grime and use solvent on a rag to remove the rest. Many workshops paint the floor with a non-slip paint (as used in aeroplane hangars) to prevent it from absorbing oil and making the floor easier to clean.
- Do not degrease engines or parts outside the workshop or where any runoff can enter the soil or the stormwater drains. Degrease engines inside in an approved trade waste wash bay or other approved means of storing or treating wastewater. Degrease your hands over a sink connected to sewer, not where the water can run off to stormwater.
- Replace your solvent-based degreasing machinery with aqueous washer units. These use biodegradable soap (allowed in the sewer system), cost less to run and are less labour intensive. (Ask your supplier about the advantages and disadvantages.)
- Store any contaminated parts like used batteries, oil filters and waste oil in a covered, sealed and bunded area (even if they have been drained). It is essential to prevent residual oil from leaking into places where they could be washed into the stormwater drain.

- Drained coolant should be contained and stored for disposal by an approved waste contractor. Radiators and blocks should be reverse flushed in a bunded cleaning area.

Water use

Water is one of our most valuable natural resources. As South Australia is the driest state in the driest developed continent, we each have a role to play in conserving this valuable resource. Stormwater can be collected and used in place of mains water for many purposes within the workplace.

Water supply organisations in South Australia have begun to implement a 'user pays' system to promote water conservation and to better reflect the true cost of water collection, storage and supply services.

Auto service and mechanical repair workshops can save money and have a positive impact on the environment by implementing a water efficiency program, starting with a water audit which will determine how much water your business uses, where there are water leaks, and what systems and equipment could be put in place to reduce your water use. For further information, please contact SA Water on (08) 8207 1350.

For information on water restrictions visit the SA Water web site—www.sawater.com.au—or telephone 1800 130 952.

The information in this document is from a series of fact sheets developed by the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Projects. Visit www.catchments.net/initiatives/initiatives_stormwater.shtml for more information on stormwater issues.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Legislation

Legislation may be viewed on the Internet at: www.parliament.sa.gov.au/dbsearch/legsearch.htm

Copies of legislation are available for purchase from:

Government Information Centre	Telephone:	13 23 24
	Facsimile:	www.info.sa.gov.au

For general information please contact:

Environment Protection Authority	Telephone:	(08) 8204 2004
GPO Box 2607	Facsimile:	(08) 8204 9393
Adelaide SA 5001	Freecall (country):	1800 623 445
	Internet:	www.epa.sa.gov.au