

# Stormwater Management for Garden Shops

Updated November 2024

EPA 497/03

## Why do garden shops need this information?

This information will increase your stormwater management awareness and strengthen your knowledge. It will help you manage the potential stormwater pollution problems associated with retail garden shops.

## 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 2015* (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 (1) of the Water Quality Policy states that a person must not discharge or deposit a pollutant listed in Part 1 of Schedule 4 of the *Policy into any waters or onto land where it might enter any waters*. The pollutants listed in Schedule 4 Part 1 which relate to garden shops include agricultural chemicals and sawdust. Under Clause 17 (2) of the Policy, soil, clay, gravel or sand; green waste (e.g. lawn clippings, leaves, prunings); fertilisers; and animal faeces must not be discharged or deposited into any waters.

For more information on the Water Quality Policy visit the EPA website at [www.epa.sa.gov.au](http://www.epa.sa.gov.au) or telephone (08) 8204 2004.

## What are your duties?

### Prevent non-stormwater discharge

Stormwater drains must only carry stormwater runoff—not wastewater or washdown water, rubbish, litter or other contaminants that can be reasonably prevented from entering the stormwater system. Further information on the disposal of waste to the sewer can be obtained from SA Water (Trade Wastes section) on 8207 1350.

### Control stormwater pollution at its source

It is preferable to reduce and, where possible, eliminate the causes or sources of stormwater pollution rather than treat the effects somewhere downstream. Source controls place the responsibility of pollution management directly on the polluter and should lead to long-term solutions with simple changes in practice. Reuse and recycling of stormwater should be encouraged where practicable.

## What is practical?

Reducing the pollutants in stormwater is at times technically difficult and may involve certain costs. However, poor environmental practices can affect our health and safety at work, the image of the company and the likelihood of prosecution for breaching environmental standards - which all impact on a company's 'bottom line'. Environmental awareness makes good business sense.

## What can you do?

Retail garden centres should be operated and maintained in a manner which prevents waste irrigation water from entering the stormwater system. All runoff should, where space permits, run to pondage and be recirculated, or be diverted to a soakage pond, grassed swale or the like (plants can act as a natural filtering device) on the periphery of the business. If no other solution is possible, advice and approval should be sought from SA Water's Trade Wastes section about disposal to the sewer.

## Water use

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

Garden shops can save money and have a positive impact on the environment by implementing a water efficiency program, starting with a water audit. A water audit 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.

## Pesticides

Pesticides are potentially one of the most damaging pollutants in our waterways as they can kill delicate native plants and organisms.

Pesticides may be introduced to the aquatic environment by spillage, accidental discharge, or direct use near aquatic environments. Remember to consider stormwater drains as part of the natural aquatic environment.

Always try to adhere to best practice pesticide management guidelines:

- Always read and follow the label instructions.
- Reserve herbicides for use when they are absolutely necessary. If the job is small remove weeds manually. Only apply pesticides to the target area.
- Do not use during periods of rain and do not spray during windy conditions as rain and wind may transport herbicide to non-target species and stormwater systems.
- Avoid spraying within and around watercourses (including stormwater drains).
- Store pesticides as hazardous goods and keep accidental spill contingency plans. Dispose of unwanted chemicals at a licensed liquid waste facility. Avoid using old pesticides and herbicides as they may be a danger to your health and the environment.

## Bunding

A bund is a low wall built to contain liquids. It can be made of any impervious material, such as bricks or concrete. A bund should be large enough to hold the contents of the largest container plus 20%. Bunded areas should be roofed to prevent rain from entering them and washing pollutants out or rusting the drums. Guidelines are available from the Environment Protection Authority - telephone 8204 2004.

Speed humps about 100 mm high across the entrance to the workshop can turn the whole premises into a bunded area. Any spills are then contained within the work area and can be mopped up. This can be an acceptable alternative to building a specific bunded area, as long as you can show that no spills can escape.

Use speed humps as bunds only if they are contained in a roofed area.

A ramp across the bund will allow easy placement and removal of containers.

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](http://www.catchments.net/initiatives/initiatives_stormwater.shtml) for more information on stormwater issues.

## Disclaimer

This publication is a guide only and does not necessarily provide adequate information in relation to every situation. This publication seeks to explain your possible obligations in a helpful and accessible way. In doing so, however, some detail may not be captured. It is important, therefore, that you seek information from the EPA itself regarding your possible obligations and, where appropriate, that you seek your own legal advice.

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## Further information

### Legislation

Legislation may be viewed on the Internet at: [www.parliament.sa.gov.au/dbsearch/legsearch.htm](http://www.parliament.sa.gov.au/dbsearch/legsearch.htm)

Copies of legislation are available for purchase from:

Government Information Centre

Telephone: 13 23 24

Internet: [www.info.sa.gov.au](http://www.info.sa.gov.au)

### General information

Environment Protection Authority

GPO Box 2607

Adelaide SA 5001

Telephone: (08) 8204 2004

Website: <https://www.epa.sa.gov.au>

Email: [epainfo@sa.gov.au](mailto:epainfo@sa.gov.au)

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