



Stormwater Management

for Retail Food Businesses

EPA 504/03

Why do you need this information?

There are many benefits to be gained by retail food businesses becoming environmentally responsible, particularly in stormwater management and pollution prevention, including:

- a better business image
- long term cost savings
- increased customer patronage
- minimal potential for environmental fines and prosecutions
- improved environmental conditions for everyone.

On the other hand, poor stormwater management practices will affect your business, your employees, your customers and the local community. They can be detrimental to health, safety, company image, financial performance and quality of life.

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.

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 retail food businesses include: cleaning agents; detergents and their by-products; putrescible waste (e.g. food scraps); rubbish; washdown water from commercial or industrial premises or wharves; and waste from grease traps.

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 retail food businesses do to prevent stormwater pollution?

Many activities of retail food shops, and other businesses, can pollute stormwater. But there are some simple things you can do to help stop contamination of the stormwater near your business.

- Keep the footpath, gutter and external areas near your business free from litter. Do not sweep litter, leaves or anything else into gutters or drains. Take pride in your business and its contribution to the local community by collecting waste left on the footpath or in the gutter and disposing of it appropriately.
- Ensure that all rainwater from roofs, yard areas, car parks and so on is directed to the stormwater system and not to the sewer. Illegal connections of stormwater to the sewer can result in overflows of raw sewage that can harm waterways.
- Ensure that uncontaminated rainwater is directed away from potentially contaminated areas, such as storage and washing areas, and does not flow across them. As an example, use speed humps to direct rainwater away from potentially contaminated areas.
- Ensure that internal drains on your premises drain to the sewer, not to stormwater. The SA Water Trade Wastes section (telephone 8207 1350, fax 8207 1361) will explain your obligations.

Preventing pollution of stormwater from outdoor areas

Garbage storage areas that are uncovered and unprotected from the weather can cause stormwater pollution, as waste and litter can be washed or blown into drains. Placing material in a position where it is likely to leak, fall or be blown into any drain or gutter used to receive rainwater is considered to be pollution and could result in on-the-spot fines or other penalties.

- Build waste and recycling storage areas from a solid, waterproof material with a smooth concrete floor.
- Site the storage areas as close as possible to the main food preparation area (subject to health requirements—check with your local council).
- Fix notes or signs to the doors or walls of all garbage storage areas to explain recycling, handling, cleaning and spill procedures to staff.
- Where there is outdoor storage of liquids such as cooking oil:
 - keep a lid on the oil drums
 - keep the oil drums covered from the rain
 - keep clearly labelled spill clean up material in an accessible area ready for use
 - install a bund to contain spills.
- When washing or hosing garbage bins, mats and crates outside:
 - always sweep up before hosing
 - never hose rubbish into the street gutter.

Wastewater

Retail food outlets often produce greasy wastewater from cleaning and food preparation. Generally your business will require a trade waste permit from SA Water to discharge wastewater to the sewer through some form of wastewater pre-treatment device such as a grease arrester.

What is a grease arrester?

The floor area of your shop should be graded and drain to a grease trap or an approved sewer outlet with an arrester. Arresters filter wastewater from kitchen floors and garbage areas to remove food scraps.

Grease arresters remove some grease, oils and food scraps by storing restaurant wastewater in a large holding tank:

- grease and oil are lighter than water and rise to the surface
- food scraps are heavier than water and settle to the bottom
- treated water in the middle is discharged to sewer.

SA Water Trade Wastes section (telephone 8207 1350) can provide advice on the size of the grease trap required.

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 to better reflect the true cost of water collection, storage and supply services.

The retail food industry 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 information on the current level of 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

Internet:

www.info.sa.gov.au

For general information please contact:

Environment Protection Authority
GPO Box 2607
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Telephone:

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