



REDUCING STORMWATER POLLUTION A GUIDE FOR HOME MAINTENANCE TEAMS AND TRADESPEOPLE

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Clean stormwater helps keep our creeks, rivers and lakes, beaches and oceans healthy. Keeping our stormwater clean also provides us with new opportunities for stormwater harvesting and reuse. This helps us to protect our precious water reserves.

Home maintenance and tradespeople have an important role in reducing stormwater pollution by not releasing hardware or garden waste into drains. This is particularly important for mobile businesses, because you could be causing pollution at many different locations.

Why is stormwater pollution a problem?

The stormwater system is the gutters, drains and pipes that collect rain run off and take it to the nearest waterway.

This water is not treated to remove litter, debris and other pollution before it reaches our waterways.

Litter, grease and oil, paint, heavy metals and other waste will cause major environmental problems if they get into the stormwater system. Oil and grease are particularly dangerous because it takes only one litre of oil to make one million litres of water (equivalent to an Olympic swimming pool) unsafe for aquatic animals and plants.

The stormwater system is not the sewer. Sewage is water from sinks, bathrooms and toilets and goes to a sewage treatment plant. Many businesses need a trade waste agreement with the local water authority to discharge waste to a sewer.

Why is stormwater management important to my mobile business?

For your safety and your clients'

Cutting the risk of pollution and spills helps keep your workplace and your clients' neighbourhood clean and safe.

Stormwater pollution is a major environmental problem

Stormwater pollution is a major threat to Port Phillip Bay and to inland rivers across Victoria. It can affect the places we swim and the water we drink and

wash in. Do not let your business be part of the problem.

Can I dispose of my waste through my clients' home waste services?

You should contact your local water authority to find out whether you need a trade waste agreement to discharge liquid waste (such as detergents) to your client's sewer (via their toilet or laundry sink). In unsewered areas, you should take your wastewater with you. Solid waste such as non-toxic packaging can be disposed of in your client's rubbish bin.

Under no circumstances should litter or waste be disposed of down the stormwater drain.

What else can I do to reduce the risk of stormwater pollution?

Preparing to work

- Educate staff about preventing stormwater pollution.
- Identify stormwater entry points at each job and avoid conducting your work near them.
- Protect drain entry points with bunds to ensure polluted water, soil, sand, sawdust etc does not wash down the drains – use a spill kit to clean it up (see spill kit information).
- Locate stockpiles of materials away from gutters and areas where they could blow or wash into drains. Protect them under tarpaulins or sheeting and use bunds, sandbags or sediment fences to stop them washing away.

because this is our home



- Establish a dedicated area for cutting timbers, plastics and metal that is away from a drain. Contain any dust or particles with barriers and sweep or clean them up promptly so they can't blow away.
- Use waste bins with lids so that litter does not blow around.
- Keep tools and equipment well maintained to cut the risk of leaks and regularly cleaned so that any leaks can be seen quickly.
- Explain your practices to your clients and set a good example.
- Wash equipment in areas that drain to the sewer or proper waste facilities - you may need to provide your own container if materials are unsuitable for the sewer.
- Return paints to the tin for reuse and clean brushes as follows:
 - Paint the brush onto newspaper.
 - Rinse with a small amount of water (for water-based paints) or solvent (oil-based paints).
 - Let the water or solvent settle.
 - Water can be poured onto a garden bed. Solvent can be reused or sent to your council's home chemical collection program.
 - Paint residue can go out with your rubbish.

On the job

- Control airborne sprays and any sawdust so they cannot land on surfaces where rain will wash them down the drain.
- Look for low-toxin alternatives and avoid using sprays on windy days.
- Chemicals, paints, oils and any materials that could wash away must be stored safely to stop them getting into stormwater drains.
- Protect exposed soils: use bunds or protective mesh.
- Put non-toxic wastewater onto the lawn and garden (check with your client first), or down the sink or toilet, not into a street gutter or drain.
- Keep pool and spa water out of stormwater drains using bunds.

Cleaning up

- Separate your waste for recycling wherever possible.
- Sweep up grass clippings, fallen leaves and garden waste and compost them. Do not sweep them into the gutter where they can block drains, causing flooding and harming aquatic plants and animals.

- Dispose of cement from mixers/barrows to a container that you take with you: don't hose sand, gravel or cement down the drain.
- Make a plan to deal with spills. Do not hose them down the drain – if the spill gets into the stormwater system you may be prosecuted for pollution.
- Get a spill kit and know how to use it. A spill kit should include:
 - protective clothing
 - absorbing and cleaning agents – sand, sawdust, absorbent pads/pellets, 'kitty litter', mops, brooms and rags
 - portable bunds ('sausage' barriers similar to sandbags) to direct spills or wash-water away from drains to clean-up areas
 - shovels, brooms and dustpans to sweep up solid or powder spills.



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