



Spill Management

Liquid waste spills that are not appropriately managed have the potential to harm the environment. By taking certain actions businesses can ensure that the likelihood of spills occurring is reduced and that the effect of spills is minimised.

Avoiding spills

By actively working to prevent spills, businesses can save money and time by not letting resources go to waste. In addition, the environment is protected from contaminants that can potentially cause harm.

▪ Correct liquid storage

All liquids should be stored in sealed containers that are free of leakage. All containers should be on sealed ground and in an undercover area. These are simple things that can be checked regularly.

Keep sharp parts and items away from containers containing liquid to avoid damage and leaks.

▪ Bunding

To prevent spills from having an effect on the business operations or the environment, bunding should be placed at all external exits and around contaminant storage areas.

A bund can be a low wall, tray, speed bump, iron angle, sloping floor, drain or similar and is used to capture spilt liquid for safe and proper disposal.

For more information on bunding, please see the environmental information guide; "Bunding".

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▪ Spill management plan

To enable spills to be avoided and to help the clean up process of any spills, both management and staff members should be aware of spill procedures. By formalising these procedures in writing, staff members can refer to them when required thus avoiding undertaking incorrect spill procedures. Businesses can also practice spill procedures by holding drills.

A spill management plan can be as simple as stating the steps taken when a spill occurs (stop, contain, report, clean up and record). A map can also be included showing the locations of spill kits or other cleaning equipment. This document could be attached to the spill kits or where other cleaning equipment is stored to ensure easy access.

▪ Spill kits

Spill kits are purpose designed units that contain several items useful for cleaning up spills that could occur. Typical items are:

- Safety gloves and appropriate protective clothing (depending on the type of chemicals held onsite)
- Absorbent pads, granules and/or pillows
- Booms for larger spills
- Mops, brooms and dustpans.

Spill kits are used to contain and clean up spills in an efficient manner. Businesses should have enough spill kits or big enough spill kits to deal with any potential spills. Spill kits should be kept in designated areas that are easily accessible to all staff.

Staff members should be trained in using the spill kit correctly. The supplier may do this at the time of purchase or the business may need to organise it itself.



CONSIDER: After cleaning up a spill, make sure the materials used to clean up are disposed of correctly. Used absorbent materials that leak or drip cannot be sent to landfill. Rather, these materials should be disposed of at a legal facility or be an authorised contractor. In addition, some materials in the spill kit may need to be refilled. This should be checked.

Responding to spills

- Stop the source

If it is safe to do so, the source of the spill should be stopped immediately. This may be a simple action like upturning a fallen container.

- Contain and control the flow

To stop the spill from expanding, absorbent materials and liquid barriers should be placed around the spill. Work from the outside to soak up the spill. It is vital that spilt liquid is not allowed to reach stormwater drains, sewer drains, natural waterways or soil.

- Report to relevant authorities

For large scale spills that involve hazardous materials, the Fire Brigade must be alerted.

If a contaminant causes pollution the business has a duty to report the incident to the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) or your local council in NSW or Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) in the ACT. Failure to report a pollution incident that has the potential to cause material harm to the environment is an offence.

If the spill is small, contained inside the workshop and easily cleaned up then there is no requirement for the business to alert any authority body.

- Clean up

Using information from Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) about the properties of the liquid spilled and the spill equipment available, spills should be cleaned up promptly.

- Record the incident

By keeping a simple log of all spills, precautionary measures can be put in place to avoid similar accidents from occurring in the future. Recording spills demonstrates that a business is motivated to prevent pollution from spills occurring.

CONSIDER: Make sure Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are available to staff members for every chemical onsite. MSDS provide a broad range of information on the chemicals used including clean up procedures and safety concerns that will affect both personnel and the environment. They are available from chemical suppliers and/or manufacturers. This is a WorkCover requirement.

Key contacts

MTA NSW

02 9213 4222

www.greenstamp.mtansw.com.au

ACTewAGL (ACT)

13 11 93

www.actewagl.com.au

Department of Environment &
Climate Change (NSW)

131 555

www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Emergency Services

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Hunter Water (NSW)

1300 657 657

www.hunterwater.com.au

Local Council Contacts (NSW)

www.dlg.nsw.gov.au

Sydney Water (NSW)

13 20 92

www.sydneywater.com.au

Territory & Municipal Services (ACT)

13 22 81

www.tams.act.gov.au

WorkCover (ACT)

02 6205 0200

www.workcover.act.gov.au

WorkCover (NSW)

13 10 50

www.workcover.nsw.gov.au