



# REDUCING STORMWATER POLLUTION A GUIDE FOR INDUSTRY

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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.

## **What is stormwater pollution and why is it 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 from industrial sites will cause major environmental problems if they get into the stormwater system.

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

## **Why is proper stormwater management important to my business?**

### ***To keep your workplace safe***

Cutting the risk of pollution and spills helps keep your workplace 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 site be part of the problem.

## **How can I avoid polluting stormwater?**

### ***Prepare your workplace***

- Educate your staff about preventing stormwater pollution.
- Mark the stormwater entry points on your site so they are not used for waste disposal.
- Make sure waste bins have secure lids so that litter does not blow around.
- Do not allow water to flow to stormwater drains from machinery and from areas where spills might occur. Use roofing to minimise rain runoff and channels or bunds (see spill kit information) that stop polluted water getting to a stormwater drain.
- Use bunds or channels to stop rain from relatively clean areas (such as carparks and driveways) from running through dirty areas (for example, work areas). Clean water that flows across a dirty area increases the amount of wastewater needing treatment, while dirty water pollutes clean areas.

*because this is our home*



- Do not let water from washing and discharge points, oil traps, filters and separators run to stormwater drains. Run them to the sewer or treatment area, according to your trade waste agreement.

### **Keep your workplace clean**

- A clean site is part of the job for all staff. Give floor and outside areas special attention.
- Chemicals, paints, oils and any materials that could wash off site must be stored to stop them getting into stormwater drains.
- Wash vehicles, engines and machinery parts in areas that drain to proper waste facilities.
- Keep machinery maintained, to cut the risk of leaks, and regularly cleaned so that any leaks can be seen quickly.
- Use spill trays under work areas where a spill could occur.
- Control airborne sprays so they cannot land on surfaces where rain will wash them down the drain.
- Minimise the waste stored on your site. Check all containers regularly for leaks and safe storage.

### **Minimise the risk of an accident**

- Safe handling and storage to prevent pollution is part of the job for all staff.
- Make a plan to deal with spills. Involve staff in this planning. Do not hose spills down the drain – if the spill gets into the stormwater system you may be prosecuted for pollution.
- Get a spill kit and train staff 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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