

PREVENTING POLLUTION FROM PAINTING

This information aims to assist people in the painting industry comply with their general environmental duty by preventing pollutants generated by their activities from entering the environment.

Paint and painting related pollutants are toxic to the environment. They can poison aquatic animals and plants if they enter the stormwater system as it drains directly to our creeks, rivers and lakes without treatment.

ON THE JOB

- > No material or wastewater should enter the stormwater system.
- > Check the location of stormwater drains (and signpost if necessary).
- > Do not store any material within 10 metres of the stormwater system or in a place where it may enter the stormwater system.



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SPILLS

- > Ensure a spill kit is available at all painting locations. Spill kits are commercially available and should be kept in a clearly labelled easy to get to place.
- > Develop a spill cleanup plan and make sure staff know what to do in the event of a spill. Prepare and practice your clean-up procedure. If a spill of paint, chemicals, or wastewater occurs in the stormwater system, stop the source, contain it and clean it up (do not use water, dry clean up only).
- > If the spill is too large to handle on your own or you don't have the appropriate clean up materials,
 - > contact ACT Fire and Rescue Communications centre (6200 4111) as soon as possible.
- > If you do have an accident and pollution occurs you are required by law to notify the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) as soon as practicable by calling Access Canberra on 13 22 81.

CLEANING UP

- > If taking a break and returning to the job, the painting equipment may be wrapped in an impervious material such as a plastic bag to slow the hardening of the paint.
- > If the job is finished, return as much paint as possible from rollers, brushes and trays back into the paint containers and seal them.
- > Paint out any excess paint onto an absorbent material such as an old rag or newspaper, allow paint to dry then dispose of the material in the general garbage bin (to landfill).
- > Ensure you have a protected paint wash out area (a designated spot on site that does not drain to the stormwater system) for washing of all painting and/or other dirty equipment. Keep paint types such as water-based and solvent based paints separate.
- > For water based paints
 - Use one container of water to clean your equipment and another container to rinse. Water from the second container, which was used for rinsing, can be reused for cleaning equipment.
 - Place all wastewater from equipment cleaning into a larger drum and allow the solids to settle and then tip the clear water onto a flat or grassy area away from the stormwater drains.
 - There are also products available that treat paint wastewater allowing for easier disposal. These include paint hardener and water / paint residue separator.
 - Use an old rag or piece of newspaper and wipe out the paint solids from the container. Allow to dry before disposing to landfill.
- > For oil based paints
 - Wash equipment in a series of solvent baths until clean. The solvent can be reused until it becomes saturated with paint.
 - Used solvent can be poured into a container for later use. An old rag or piece of newspaper should be used to wipe out the paint solids from the container. Allow the solids to dry before disposing in the garbage to landfill.
 - Solvents should be stored in labelled, sealed containers to prevent evaporation.
 - You must dispose of waste solvent through a licensed hazardous waste contractor. Do not place in a residential garbage bin or on the ground.

DISPOSAL

- > Dry solvent or water based paint residue (also dry brushes and rollers) can be placed in the garbage bin. It must contain no liquid.
- > Contact the EPA through Access Canberra on 13 22 81 for advice on the removal and disposal of dry lead paint.
- > There is no liquid waste disposal facility in the ACT. Therefore an appropriately licensed hazardous waste contractor must be engaged to dispose of all unused or unwanted paint and cleaning solvents to an appropriately licensed interstate treatment facility. Find a contractor in the yellow pages or contact the EPA through Access Canberra 13 22 81 for advice on disposal.
- > Water washings (wastewater) from water based paint can be disposed of to sewer with ACTEW approval (phone 13 11 93).

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- > Water washings must not be discharged within 10 metres of a stormwater system, or where it has the potential to enter the stormwater system.
- > Empty paint cans be recycled at Mitchell and Mugga Lane Resource Management centres.
- > For household use disposal refer to Hazardous Waste in Your Home information sheet www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au

GRAFFITI – LEGAL AND ILLEGAL

Many paints and substances used for graffiti are toxic to the environment. The substances used to remove graffiti are also toxic. If not used carefully they can cause considerable damage to our creeks, lakes and rivers by polluting the stormwater system.

Early removal is recommended to discourage offenders and to minimise the hardening of the substance used. Ensure the runoff does not enter the stormwater system. Graffiti on public buildings can be reported by calling Canberra Connect on 13 22 81. Graffiti on privately owned assets is the responsibility of the asset owner.

SPRAY PAINTING

Spray painting has the potential to cause air pollution and also affect neighbouring properties. Do not use spray paint in a manner which causes the paint to drift onto other properties or public land. Do not use organic solvents that result in significant vapour emissions onto other property or public land. Small amounts of spray painting, with proper ventilation, can be done in garages with the doors closed. Large spray painting jobs should be conducted in properly constructed spray booths. Spray painting in the open can lead to soil contamination, vegetation damage and fallout on to other sensitive surfaces such as cars. It can also affect the health of people nearby that may be impacted by fumes, odours or drifts. Ensure you comply with AS/NZ 4114:1 & 4114:2.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Under the Environment Protection Act 1997 it is an offence for a person to allow any substance other than rainwater to enter the stormwater system or to allow liquid wastes to contaminate soil. Contraventions of the Act can lead to an on-the-spot fine of up to \$200 for an individual and \$1,000 for a company or penalties of up to \$1,100 for an individual and \$5,500 for a company. More serious offences can lead to penalties of up to \$50,000, 6 months in jail and a criminal record. Odour, dust and fumes may also be considered an Environmental Nuisance for which penalties apply.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the EPA by calling Access Canberra on 13 22 81 or email environment.protection@act.gov.au. Go to www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au for other information relating to your industry.