HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

Storage and use

03

Straightforward advice to help vehicle repairers get ahead in today's business environment

Many of the everyday substances stored and used at vehicle repair premises are hazardous to people and the environment if stored or used incorrectly, so you must have systems in place to prevent or contain accidental leaks and spills. Correct storage and use of these substances can help stop pollution of air, soil, stormwater and local waterways.

TYPICAL ENVIRONMENTALLY HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES ON VEHICLE REPAIRERS' PREMISES

- petrol, paints, thinners, degreasers
- body filler ("bog")
- paint stripper (methylene chloride)
- rust proofer
- argon/Migset

See fact sheet 5 for more on liquid, solid and hazardous wastes such as stored pollutants removed from vehicles like radiator and brake fluids, as well as paint and oil-contaminated dusts and wash waters.

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES INFORMATION

Material safety data sheets (MSDS) tell you about the safe use and disposal of substances, and often have useful information about environmental hazards. An MSDS is just as important as any tool or piece of machinery in your workshop. It contains information that can save lives and the environment in an emergency. You should get an MSDS with every hazardous substance you buy, handle or use. If you don't have one for any substance, ask your supplier.

KEY POINTS

This fact sheet gives practical tips on environmentally responsible ways of:

- using chemicals
- storing chemicals
- managing solvents, oils, radiator coolant and paint
- preventing soil and groundwater contamination

USING CHEMICALS

Think about the amount and type of chemicals you are using and consider the alternatives. There may be another more environmentally-friendly and competitively-priced solvent or paint available on the market that you could use instead. Ask your supplier and see fact sheet 5 for more information.

STORING CHEMICALS

Keep all hazardous substances such as disinfectants, fuels, oils, detergents, poisons, solvents, alkaline or acidic solutions in a designated covered, sealed and bunded area away from stormwater drains, and make sure any spills or leaks can't get into them. This is good environmental practice even if not specifically required by HSNO regulations.

Designing your chemical storage area

- you may not need a bund if:
  - you store your chemicals inside a workshop or elsewhere indoors, and
  - you can show that any spills will not escape the area and contaminate soil or stormwater
- if you need a bund, the capacity of the bunded area should be at least 10% greater than the capacity of the largest tank or package in the compound
- certain substances are controlled by the HSNO Act. These substances include petrol, solvents, liquefied petroleum gas and ammonia. To see what specific controls are required by HSNO go to **www.hsno.govt.nz** or **www.ermanz.govt.nz** or call 0800 376 234

A low nib wall or speed bump is all you need to keep contaminants out of stormwater

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Managing your chemical storage area

- store each chemical in a separate container and clearly label each container with the name of the chemical it contains. Keep an up-to-date and legible list of all chemicals on your premises
- segregate incompatible hazardous substances from each other in storage areas
- inspect storage containers regularly. Replace them if they are rusted, damaged or likely to leak. Allow yourself easy access to all parts of the store
- put drip trays where leakage is likely – for example, under taps or bungs
- cover drums that are stored outside to stop them rusting
- protect drums and tanks from possible collision and keep all sharp parts away from chemical or liquid containers to avoid damage and spills
- store empty drums in a covered or bunded area because of the risk of leakage of residual chemicals. Have them removed as soon as possible. Seal drums awaiting collection and store them upright
- minimise the number of containers you store at your site to reduce risk and clutter. If you haven't used it in the last six months you probably don't need it

Send all used oil and chemicals to a reputable waste contractor for recycling or disposal as outlined in fact sheet 5. To minimise risk to your business, make sure that your waste contractor transports, stores and disposes of your waste in a legal manner – ask to see their permits.

Clean up all spills immediately. Have a spill kit in a clearly labelled and easily accessible place – and remember to restock it after each use. See fact sheet 4 for more on emergency response to spills.

SOLVENT, OIL, RADIATOR COOLANT AND PAINT

- take a 'just-in-time' approach to your stocks of flammable liquids such as solvents, to minimise quantities stored, especially on work areas
- use purpose-built safety containers for transfer from storage areas, in order to avoid the use of open topped containers
- solvents tend to be highly volatile and flammable. Store them away from heat, naked flames, direct sunlight, oil and other flammable liquids. Avoid unnecessary human exposure to solvents by storing them in a covered container with a tap (to avoid the need to pour). Keep the storage area well ventilated
- store small containers (25 litres and less) of paint and new coolant off the floor and away from entrances and stormwater drains. Always put the lid firmly back on after use
- store larger drums in a bunded or indoor area
- take care with rags soaked with fish oil or solvent – they are a known fire hazard
- do not tip solvent waste, oil or coolant down the sewer or stormwater drains, onto the ground or into trenches. See fact sheet 5, 'Managing and minimising waste' to find out more on responsible management of liquid and hazardous wastes
- collect waste oil for recycling as outlined in fact sheet 5

SOIL AND GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION

You must not allow any hazardous liquids to soak into the ground. If they do, you may end up with a contaminated site that is costly to clean up and your land value could be greatly reduced.

If contaminants soak into the ground and reach groundwater there is a high risk that they will flow off-site and contaminate neighbouring land, groundwater supplies or local creeks.

HSNO v RMA

The HSNO Act and the RMA work together to protect human health and the environment. The HSNO Act pulls together the management of hazardous substances into one law that focuses on all of their hazards – to both humans and the environment. The Act sets national baseline standards for controlling hazardous substances through regulations. This complements the Resource Management Act (RMA), which allows for further controls based on the sensitivity of the local environment and local community needs through district and regional plans. See fact sheet 1 for more information.

ACTION STEPS

Check your premises and your paperwork to make sure that you:

- ☐ have MSDS sheets for the hazardous substances on your site
- ☐ label all new and used substances you store
- ☐ use safe and environmentally-friendly substances wherever possible
- ☐ store your hazardous substances where rain and runoff can't get at them and where they can't get into soil or stormwater
- ☐ regularly remove 'old' containers and chemicals such as solvent, oil and paint from your site for re-use, recycling or appropriate disposal

FIND OUT MORE FROM

- your city or district council
- regional council Pollution Hotline and hazardous substances team
- HSNO: go to **www.hsno.govt.nz** or **www.ermanz.govt.nz** or call 0800 376 234
- the Yellow Pages under 'Environmental consultants', 'Environmental products and supplies' and 'Pollution control'

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