



# Environmental MATTERS



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## Waste Minimisation

### How much waste do you produce?

Did you know that, each year in Australia, each one of us generates an average of 1000kg (one tonne) of industrial, commercial and domestic waste? Most ends up in landfill sites. As well as this industrial, commercial and domestic waste, there's demolition waste, radioactive waste, sewage sludge, agricultural waste, mining wastewaters, and waste of energy and water.

### What is waste minimisation?

Waste minimisation aims to eliminate waste *before* it is produced and reduce its quantity and toxicity. Prevention is the primary goal, followed by reuse, recycling, treatment and appropriate disposal.

### Why minimise waste?

Population increases and high consumption of products in the developed world has created a global waste problem. Affluence has created effluence - the more we have, the more we have to dispose of safely. Scientists now believe we're producing more waste than the environment can absorb. The benefits of minimising waste include:

- reducing demand for landfill space,

- saving resources and energy,
- reducing pollution, and
- increasing the efficiency of production.

If each one of us changes the way we think and act, together we can reduce the amount of waste we make and get rid of.

### What is your role?

As environmental concerns increase and disposal costs rise, industry needs to increasingly implement waste prevention and cleaner production practices.

The first step in an industry waste minimisation and prevention plan is a waste audit. This involves listing and measuring wastes produced at all stages of the manufacturing process / business, then adding up their treatment and disposal costs. Many wastes can be reused or recycled within the same process or factory or used in another process in a different factory. Industry can also re-examine and redesign products to limit production of throwaway items and develop and market long-lasting, reusable, repairable and recyclable products.

## REMEMBER: REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

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## THINK BEFORE YOU ACT!

Protecting the environment is everyone's responsibility - if you don't take it seriously, you could be fined. On-the-spot fines of up to \$1000 apply, however heavier penalties may be issued by a magistrate's court.

**DID YOU KNOW:** It is against the law to place the following items in or near a watercourse, roadside gutter or stormwater drain where they have the potential to contaminate the environment:

- Rubbish
- Building waste
- Sawdust
- Cement or concrete
- Cigarette butts
- Degreasing agent, paint, varnish or paint thinner

-Insecticide, herbicide, fungicide or other biocide

-Oil

-Scrap metal, motor vehicle parts, motor vehicle bodies or tyres

-Solid or liquid waste from an on-site domestic waste water treatment system

-Any manufactured product or any by-product or waste from a manufacturing process that has a pH < 6 or > 9 sand, silt or mud.

**The laws seek to ensure only clean, fresh water is released to stormwater drains.**

Contact Council for further information.



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Did you know that there are restrictions on the amounts of hazardous liquids that can be stored on a site?

Under the *Dangerous Goods and Safety Management Act 2001*, storage limits for hazardous liquids such as paints, oils and fuel must be stored at levels below minor storage limits listed in the Australian Standards AS 1940 "The storage and handling of flammable and combustible liquids". If storage limits are above minor storage

### Storage of Hazardous Liquids

limits then a licence under the Act is required.

For example:

- Minor storage limits for oil indoors of a work shop/factory is 4 litres per 1 m<sup>2</sup> up to 2000L per 500 m<sup>2</sup> area.
- Minor storage limits for oil outdoors of a work shop/factory is 2500 Litres if stored in an attached outhouse or shed if separated by a partition having an fire rating level (FRL) of 60/60/60, or 5000 Litres if stored outside, or in a detached shed or outhouse separated from the factory/workshop by at least 1 metre.

**Please contact the Environmental Health Office for further information on the amount of hazardous liquids that can be stored at your premises.**



Environmental Health  
Gladstone Regional Council  
101 Goondoon Street  
Gladstone Qld 4680  
PO Box 29  
Gladstone Qld 4680

Phone: (07) 4976 6996  
Fax: (07) 4975 7106

E-mail:  
info@gladstonerc.qld.gov.au  
Website:  
www.gladstonerc.qld.gov.au

## Stormwater Management

### What is stormwater?

Stormwater is rainwater that flows across outside surfaces into stormwater drains and gutters. The water is not treated and flows directly to our creeks, rivers, groundwater and oceans. Stormwater should only contain clean rainwater, and no pollutants such as waste, sediment, heavy metals, oils and greases.

### What can you do to stop stormwater pollution?

Many activities can pollute our stormwater. Think about all your work practices and ensure that none lead to contamination of water that will run out into stormwater drains. Think about the uncovered areas of your workplace—when it rains will the rainwater become contaminated

before it gets to the stormwater drain? Oils and grease are the most common pollutants to be discharged. Non compliance with this is not only a breach of your site conditions, but an offence under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* and carries an on the spot fine of \$1000.

### Preventing stormwater pollution

- Confine your washing and cleaning to a contained, bunded area, such as a wash down bay.
- Do not hose the workshop floor unless all water goes through a treatment system and to sewer. Try sweeping or vacuuming the floors instead.
- All repairs and servicing to be conducted inside a workshop. Do not



degrease engines or parts outside the workshop or where any runoff can enter the stormwater drains.

- All possible contaminants are to be stored bunded and covered.
- Always keep spill containment readily available.

*By addressing stormwater pollution at your workplace, you minimise your potential for environmental fines and prosecutions, as well as protecting our waterways.*

[www.gladstonerc.qld.gov.au](http://www.gladstonerc.qld.gov.au)

