



Automotive Painting and Panelbeating

Pollution Prevention - actionSHEET 1

If your activities involve painting, sanding/wet sanding or any other vehicle body repair activities using paints, solvents, thinners or detergents, it is really important that you consider the effects these activities may have on the environment, before you begin.

What sort of things cause pollution?

Poor work practices while repairing, sanding, washing or painting are responsible for some common problems:

- Contaminated wash water draining into stormwater drains
- Poor storage of products or wastes in uncovered containers resulting in spills and overflows which pollute stormwater
- Blocking stormwater grates and drains with waste material
- Stains or coloured marks on the ground, in gutters or on stormwater grates
- Solvent smells or coloured water in stormwater drains.

How can my waste pollute the environment?

Any material or waste that is left uncovered or on the ground outside can flow or be washed by rain into a nearby stormwater drain. Stormwater drains discharge into local streams or to the coast. Any waste material that gets into the stormwater system will end up polluting these environments.

Waste paint, paint thinners and sanding waste often contain substances that can pollute our environment. These include toxic solvents, heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, chromium and mercury, and suspended solids.

The waste water from washing cars can contain dirt, oil, fuel residues, metals, paint and cleaners such as acids, solvents, detergents or degreasers.

When they get into water, these substances can cause harm to the environment by:

- Poisoning animals and plants
- Smothering small aquatic plants and animals and destroying where they live
- Preventing light from entering the water, making it difficult for animals to find food and for plants to get energy from the sun
- Irritating and clogging the gills of fish
- Chemicals building up in the bodies of plants and animals, causing long-term health effects or rendering them unfit for human consumption.

Some materials used in the spraypainting and panelbeating industry can also get into the air, affecting the health of employees and people in the area. Even a very small quantity of a pollutant, or just one accidental discharge, can drastically alter the quality of a stream. Fish, insects and plants can be killed and habitats destroyed. A waterway can take years to recover.

You may think that your little bit of waste can't harm the environment, but combine it with the waste produced by others doing the same sorts of things and it adds up to a significant amount of pollution occurring in Southland, every day of the year.

The cumulative effects of these combined discharges cause serious damage to our environment and must be prevented.

It is illegal to cause pollution

In New Zealand the Resource Management Act 1991 is the law that protects our environment. It makes every person responsible for ensuring that their activities and those of their employees do not pollute our environment. Specifically, it is illegal to allow any substance to enter water, either directly, through the stormwater system or via the contamination of land, without prior authorisation from Environment Southland.

Environment Southland is committed to caring for our environment and is responsible for both helping the residents of our region to prevent pollution and enforcing the Resource Management Act if necessary. By making a few simple changes to your site and daily practices, you can help contribute to a pollution-free environment that everyone can enjoy, both now and in the future.



Play it safe

You can stop your activities causing pollution

Wet-abrasive blasting (water blasting)

- Wet abrasive blasting activities may require a resource consent. Please contact Environment Southland for more information.
- Use wet abrasive blasting in an area that will contain the waste water. Use bunds or another containment system. Allow the spent blasting material to dry before collecting up the material and disposing of it. Spent blasting material should be treated as a hazardous waste. Please contact Environment Southland for disposal advice.
- Collect all waste water and dispose of it to the sewer with the approval of your local council. Use an appropriate drainage system or a wet vacuuming system.

- Clean up all spilled material immediately.
- Remember that waste solvents can be recycled.
- Store all paints, thinners and other liquids under cover to prevent rainwater washing out pollutants.

Washing activities

- Wash vehicles and equipment down so that wash water enters a sewer gully trap (you may need approval from the city or district council) and not a stormwater drain.
- Use cleaning methods that require less or no water, such as sweeping, or a bucket and rag.
- Get vehicles washed by a commercial cleaner with compliant facilities.

Dry sanding is a better option as it minimises the amount of waste produced.

Stationary dry-abrasive blasting

- Dry abrasive blasting activities require a resource consent. Please contact Environment Southland for more information.
- Abrasive blasting must be carried out in a room/cabinet constructed to contain all emissions from the blasting operation.
- The room must be totally enclosed and vented to the atmosphere through an effective dust collector, like a fabric filter or paper cartridge.
- Spent blasting material should be treated as a hazardous waste. Please contact Environment Southland for disposal advice.

For more information on wet and dry sanding please refer to actionSHEET 8 – Abrasive Blasting.

Painting

- Wash out water-based painting equipment into a sink or sewer gully trap.
- Always use drip trays when transferring or draining paints and other liquids.
- Allow paint thinners to settle, then strain out the waste solids and re-use the liquid.



ALWAYS have a good Spill Response Procedure. Keep spill equipment handy and make sure your staff are well trained.

Environment Southland can help your company develop a Spill Response Procedure and provide guidance on these matters. Call 0800 76 88 45 and ask to speak to a Pollution Prevention Officer.

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Further Information

For a copy of the **Pollution Prevention Guide** or more information on pollution prevention, contact Environment Southland, telephone 03 211 5115 or 0800 76 88 45 or visit our website at www.es.govt.nz.