

Protected Wash Areas



'Do it right on site' is a project to help the construction industry protect the environment and achieve the many benefits that come from doing so.

Protected Wash Areas What are they?

Protected Wash Areas refers to having a designated spot on site that does not drain to the stormwater system for washing of all painting, plastering, concreting and other dirty equipment.

Why are they important?

Even at low concentrations water soluble paints (acrylics) raise the turbidity in creeks which reduces oxygen and light, resulting in plants, fish and frog deaths. Oil or turps based paints form a thin film over the surface of water, starving insects, frogs, and fish species of oxygen. They can also contain heavy metal components that are highly toxic and irritating to all animal species including humans. Concrete alters the pH of the water making it too alkaline for many plants and animals to survive. Protected Wash Areas are required to trap silt and pollutants and prevent them entering the stormwater system.

What do I need to do?

Before building commences:

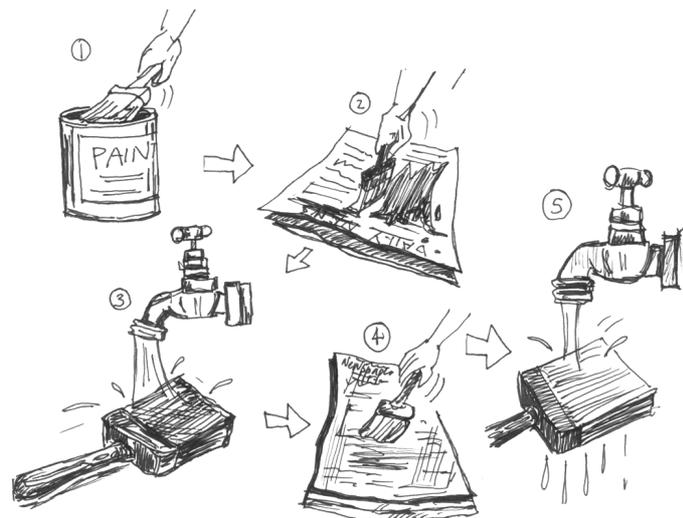
Choose a site for the wash down area that is away from drainage lines and stormwater pits. Show its location on the Soil and Water Management Plan and ensure all staff are aware of it.

Installing the controls:

The wash down area should have sediment controls around it and be large enough to hold all waste water generated. It could be clearly signposted to alert subcontractors and staff of their responsibilities.

Minimise the amount of waste water generated by:

- Sweeping excess dirt and mud off equipment prior to washing.
- With Paint wastes- Spin the rollers and brushes to remove excess paint and return as much as possible to the original container for reuse. For water based paints- wash brushes in small amounts of water over newspaper. This will let the water soak through into the ground and keep the paint residue on the paper. The paper can then be placed in a solid waste bin or taken to a licensed solid waste transfer station. It is illegal to let paint and other liquid wastes contaminate the soil.
- 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. Solvent should be stored in air tight tins to prevent evaporation and disposed of to a licensed solid waste transfer station. It can not be placed in the bin or on the ground.



- Plastering wastes and wash waters should be allowed to dry within the protected wash area and then disposed of either to a bin or taken to a licensed waste depot. Solid wastes from plastering such as calcium sulphate can be used as a modifier in gardens.

Remember to clean up all site debris- don't sweep or hose it into the gutter.



Maintenance of the controls:

The protected wash area and its sediment controls will need to be emptied of solid residues regularly in order for it to have the capacity to catch and detain waste waters. The larger the area the less often this will need to be done. Solids from this process should be disposed of in a bin or taken to a licensed waste depot.

Remember:

Everyone has a responsibility to protect the environment. The site supervisor is required to make sure that all workers, including sub-contractors are doing the right thing and all workers are required to notify their supervisors and Council if they see pollution occurring.

It is illegal for any substance other than rainwater to enter the stormwater system. If you do have an accident and pollution occurs you are required by law to notify the Council so that they can work with you to minimise any harm to the environment.

Penalties for polluting the stormwater system range from \$750 on the spot fines to \$1 million and seven years in gaol. Both companies and individuals can be fined.

Council Officers and the EPA enforce the environmental legislation and do routine inspections of building sites. They can issue notices to make companies clean up sites, change the way they are managing the sites and if necessary, cease work. They will attempt to work with you but penalties will be issued if a satisfactory environmental outcome is not achieved.

List of fact sheets available from Council:

1. Diversion of Upslope Water
2. Dust Control
3. Early installation of Roof Drainage
4. Excavation Pump Out
5. Protected Concrete, Brick and Tile Cutting
6. Protected Concrete Delivery
7. Protected Service Trenches
8. Protected Stockpiles
- 9. Protected Wash Areas**
10. Protected Waste Management and Chemical Storage
11. Protecting Vegetation
12. Protection of Gutter and Street Stormwater Drains
13. Protection of Site Stormwater Pits
14. Sediment Controls
15. Soil and Water Management Plans
16. Stabilised Site Access

For further information on preventing pollution from building and construction sites contact your local council:

'Do it right on site' is funded by the Natural Heritage Trust and the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils – Bankstown, Botany Bay, Canterbury, Hurstville, Kogarah, Marrickville, Randwick, Rockdale, South Sydney, Sutherland Shire, Waverley and Woollahra.

THE DRAIN IS JUST FOR RAIN



Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils