



Tool Box Talk

Focus on Performance

Disposal of Wash Down Water

What?

Construction activities such as jetting gulleys, washing down buildings, plant or machinery, hosing out concrete vehicles or mixers and degreasing engines all produce contaminated water known as trade effluent.

All involved staff must know where washing down can be carried out, which drains are to be protected, what treatment of the dirty water is required and how it is to be disposed of.

Why?

Wash down water from construction activities may contain mud, grease, oils, detergents, cleaning agents and toxic chemicals. It is an offence to allow polluting materials such as these to enter a watercourse or drain without permission from the regulator. The polluter will pay for any clean up costs if there is an environmental incident.

How?

- Task RAMS should explain how any wash water is to be disposed of. Ensure you understand and comply.
- Identify where on site any washing down of plant and machinery is to be done and only use this area.
- Check with your manager before using degreasing or cleansing solutions as they will make water disposal more difficult and may not be allowed.
- Don't let water with detergents in it into an oil interceptor - the detergent breaks down oil trapped in the interceptor and releases it, causing even more pollution.
- Ensure that any wash down water is contained and cannot enter drains or watercourses.
- Don't wash down directly into watercourses or surface water drains or road side gulleys.
- Water produced from jetting gulleys must be captured and disposed of, not washed into the drainage system, unless there is a permit in place.
- Report to your manager any washing down you think may cause a pollution incident.



Questions

1. Which activities are you undertaking to produce dirty water? How will the water be disposed of?
2. Where should plant be washed down?
3. Why shouldn't you use detergents on sites with oil interceptors?
4. Are there any oil interceptors on site?

If you have any queries regarding the content of this tool box talk please contact your Sustainability Advisor or Line Manager.