

TOOLBOX TALK

WASHING DOWN PLANT & MACHINERY

WHAT?

Washing down plant and machinery, hosing down concrete truck mixers or degreasing engines can all lead to serious pollution incidents if it is not properly carried out.

The resulting dirty water should not be allowed to enter surface water drains or road gullies, which generally discharge directly into local streams, rivers or soakaways.

Careful consideration must be given to where washing down is carried out.



WHY?

- ◆ **Avoid environmental harm:** Dirty washing and rinsing water may contain dislodged mud, grease, oils, detergents, cleaning agents or toxic chemicals and materials that can kill fish and other aquatic life and which may also seriously affect the surrounding environment.
- ◆ **Avoid prosecution:** It is an offence to allow polluting matter such as silt, cement, concrete, fuel, oils, cleaning chemicals and detergents to enter a watercourse or a drain.
- ◆ **Cost:** The cost of cleaning up a pollution incident far exceeds the cost of putting proper control measures in place.

DO

- ✓ Ask your manager if there is a place specially designated for washing down plant and machinery.
- ✓ Use only these designated wash down areas whenever they are provided.
- ✓ Ensure that any wash down slurry or residue is contained and cannot enter drains or watercourses.
- ✓ Check with your manager before using degreasing or cleansing solutions– don't just assume they can be used.
- ✓ Report to your manager any washing down that may cause a pollution incident.

DON'T

- ✗ DON'T wash down before finding out the proper place in which to do it
- ✗ DON'T wash down directly into watercourses or surface water drains
- ✗ DON'T allow dirty wash down water to go down roadside gullies
- ✗ DON'T wash down near material or storage areas or immediately next to working areas.
- ✗ DON'T use any more water than is necessary – reduce waste.