

If your day-to-day activities involve the collection, transfer, storage or disposal of oil or oily substances, you should consider the effects your activity may have on the environment.

What causes pollution?

Poor work practices at your site during oil changing, bleeding of brakes, transfer of oil to storage containers and the storage of waste oil may be causing some of these common problems:

- Oil stained concrete or earth around work areas
- A messy, waste oil storage area where spills have occurred during liquid transfer, or lids have been left off drums and oil has overflowed
- Sawdust or rags put down to soak up an oil spill but not properly cleaned up
- Stormwater sumps containing a visible sheen or a layer of oil
- An oily sheen on rainwater run-off.

How your waste can pollute the environment

Any material or substance left uncovered or on the ground outside can flow or be washed by rainwater into a nearby stormwater drain where it will result in the pollution of streams and/or the coast.

Oil can partially dissolve in water introducing toxic substances into the environment. These include heavy metals such as lead and chromium and hydrocarbon compounds that are a by-product of vehicle operation.

If discharged, these substances can cause harm to the environment by:

- Allowing oil to seep into the land and underlying groundwater
- Poisoning animals and plants
- Forming an oily layer or film on surface water and preventing oxygen and sunlight from entering the water, making it difficult for animals to breathe and find food and for plants to get energy
- Building up chemicals in the bodies of plants and animals potentially causing long-term health effects.

Even a very small quantity of a pollutant, or just one accidental discharge can drastically alter the quality of a stream. Fish, insects and plant life can be killed and their habitats destroyed. The stream can take many years to recover.

You may think that your little bit of waste can't harm the environment but there are other people in the region carrying out activities similar to yours. Your

waste when combined with that of others can amount to a significant amount of pollution occurring every day of the year. The cumulative effects of combined discharges can 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 clearly states that every person is responsible for ensuring that their activities and those of their employees do not contribute to pollution of 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 authorisation.

By making a few simple changes to your site and your daily practices you will be contributing to a pollution free environment for us all to enjoy both now and in the future.

Play it safe – stop pollution from your activities

Oily yards

- Clean parts of your yard that are dirty and oily. Block off access to all stormwater drains on your site and use an appropriate cleaning agent to scrub back to a clean surface. Capture the wash down and dispose of it as wastewater. With a clean surface, you will be able to see spills and leaks as they occur and prevent them from causing pollution
- Remove all soil and gravel that is visibly contaminated with oil to a commercial waste contractor for treatment and/or disposal.

Oily work

- If possible carry out all work under cover
- Always use drip trays when transferring or draining oil and other liquids, and wipe up all small drips and spills
- Clean up all spilt material immediately and dispose of waste into a bin, ensuring that it won't leak out.

Oily storage

- Store all waste and other liquids in a covered bunded area. If possible designate a reliable staff member to drain off the clean stormwater that accumulates in the bunded area

- If oil must be stored outside, keep lids and caps on containers, ensure containers are robust and use a secure area to avoid vandalism.

Burning

- It is illegal to burn waste oil in Taranaki in any manner without a resource consent.

Always have a good spill contingency plan. Keep pollution control equipment handy and make sure your staff members are well trained.

Waste oil can be recycled – contact the Taranaki Regional Council’s Waste Minimisation Officer for details.

**For further advice or information contact:
Taranaki Regional Council, Private Bag 713
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Ph: 06 765 7127 Fax: 06 765 5097
Pollution Hotline: 0800 736 222
www.trc.govt.nz**



Photo1: Store oil products in a secure bunded area