

If your day-to-day activities involve the flushing, draining or replacement of radiators, you should consider the potential your activity has to pollute the environment.

What causes pollution?

Poor work practices at your site while maintaining vehicle radiators may be causing some of these common problems:

- Radiator fluid, sometimes fluorescent green and sometimes rusty in colour, running across the yard into a nearby stormwater drain or soaking into the ground
- Rusty brown stains on the yard leading from the work area to the stormwater drain
- An oily, rusty sheen on rainwater run-off from external work areas.

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 the local stream and/or the coast.

Waste radiator fluids contain a number of substances that can pollute our environment. These include additives such as ethylene glycol, dissolved metals such as aluminium, iron and copper and suspended solids (the small particles that give the water a rusty colour).

If discharged, 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
- Causing all of the oxygen in the water to be used up by materials broken down by bacteria. This effectively suffocates all life in the stream.

Even a very small quantity of 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

- 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. Then 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
- Store all disused parts under cover
- Always use drip trays when working with parts that contain fluids
- Collect all waste radiator fluids for recycling or proper disposal either to the sewer with approval from the district council or via a commercial waste contractor
- Clean up spilt material immediately and dispose of waste into a bin, making sure that it won't leak out

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

**For further advice or information contact the
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