



Drain Stencilling Guidelines

Why stencil stormwater drains?

Careless disposal of cleaning wastewater and toxic chemicals down stormwater drains can be a major pollution problem and a threat to your business. Often it occurs because business owners, employees and clients don't realise the connection between the stormwater drains and the local stream, river, lake, wetland, estuary or groundwater resource. Many people unknowingly believe that stormwater drains connect to the sewer or wastewater treatment system and are unaware that whatever enters drains is discharged directly into the nearest body of water without the benefit of treatment. Few people would purposely pollute or risk prosecution.

Allowing cleaning wastewater or other harmful materials to discharge to stormwater drains is an offence that can result in an on the spot fine or prosecution under the Unauthorised Discharge Regulations (refer to *Information Sheet 2: Environmental Law*).

Stormwater drain stencilling, along with appropriate training in environmental management practices, can be part of an effective program to increase employee awareness of wastewater management issues. It can also be used as an educational and interactive tool to engage clients and the wider community in stormwater pollution prevention.

Benefits to your business

- ◆ Helps protect your business from unintentional disposal of wastewater and other pollutants down stormwater drains that can result in enforcement actions and fines
- ◆ Opportunity for your business to participate in a community service to help prevent pollution in your local environment
- ◆ Shows your clients and local community that you are committed to protecting the environment
- ◆ Good opportunity to promote your business' environmental ethos

Equipment required

- ◆ **Drain stencil/s.** A variety of stencils are available from the Green Stamp Coordinator. Choose a stencil that is suitable for the site. Ensure the stencil is the correct size as drains come in many forms and shapes. Use a stencil with appropriate wording according to where the drain flows and ensure that the majority of people that come in contact with the drain will understand the language used. In some situations a stencil may need to be custom made.
- ◆ **Road or line marking paint.** Road or line marking paint is recommended for drain stencilling as it is generally long lasting, hard wearing and bonds to road surfaces. Use a bright colour such as yellow or white for maximum effectiveness. For road marking paint suppliers look in the Yellow Pages under 'Stencils' or contact your local paint supplier.
- ◆ **Wire brush, dust pan and bannister brush**
- ◆ **Rubbish bags**
- ◆ **Work gloves, safety goggles, nose and mouth filter masks**
- ◆ **Traffic safety vests & woggles hats.** Your local Council could lend you these.
- ◆ **Cleanup rags**

Instructions & Environmental Considerations

1. Ensure you have received permission from your local council to stencil road verge stormwater drains and/or from land owners in private yards and parking lots.
2. Choose a dry, sunny day. Pavement should be dry and warm. Avoid rainy days, as stormwater will carry your paint down the drain. Avoid windy days as spray paint can drift into the environment.

3. Use a wire brush and dust pan & banister brush to clean the surface in preparation for painting. Discard any litter and debris into a rubbish bag for disposal in a general waste bin.
4. Position the stencil next to (not over) the stormwater drainage inlet where the message will be most visible.
5. Consider using a large cardboard box cut open as a shield from drifting paint overspray (especially near buildings and parked cars).
6. Apply the paint with a side to side motion, taking care the paint doesn't go down the drain. Two light coats are better than a thick single coat that bleeds and puddles.
7. Lift the stencil by holding at both ends and lift with a quick vertical motion. You don't have to wait until the paint is completely dry.
8. Clean up - Place stencils in plastic bags for transportation. To remove paint, allow stencil to dry and then peel off excess paint. Discard dry paint flakes and other litter and debris collected from the site in a general waste bin.

Safety Considerations

Since many stencilling projects will take place on the road verge or in car parks, volunteer safety is of utmost importance.

- ◆ Ensure that all people taking part in the project are covered for liability insurance either with your organisation, their organisation or by your local council.
- ◆ Talk through all the safety aspects with those involved in the project just prior to commencement.
- ◆ Do not work within the road carriageway, stay on the nature strip to stencil and keep the body away from the road.
- ◆ Wear reflective safety vests and place witches hats and/or road safety signs around the work area.
- ◆ Always work in teams with at least one person designated to watch out for traffic.
- ◆ Be careful with the paint. Avoid contact with skin and do not breathe in the vapours. Wear protective gloves, safety goggles and nose and mouth filter masks.
- ◆ Wear protective clothing, a hat and sunscreen. Be sure to take plenty of drinking water. Avoid the middle part of the day in summer when the weather is warmest.
- ◆ Parental permission and adult supervision is required when volunteers are children.

Educating client's about stormwater pollution prevention

The cleaning industry is a mobile service, hence stormwater pollution is more likely to occur on client's premises rather than the businesses. The Green Stamp Program therefore advises cleaners to encourage their clients to stencil their stormwater drains.

Stencilling client's drains will act as a reminder to cleaning staff to not discharge cleaning wastewater into the stormwater system. It will also act to prevent other forms of stormwater pollution from the site such as smokers discarding cigarette butts, oil and fuel from vehicles and machinery, industrial wastewater and other contaminants depending on landuse.

Links to other Drain Stencilling Programs

There may already be an established drain stencilling program operating in your local area. To find out contact your local council or catchment group (contact the Swan Catchment Centre on (08) 9374 3333 and they will put you in contact with your local group).

For further information about the Green Stamp program and how to incorporate environmental best management practices in your cleaning business, please contact;

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