

# Cleaning

## Business Pollution Prevention Fact sheet

Cleaning activities are an important part of any business. Not only do clean and tidy premises present a good image to your customers they contribute to a safe and healthy workplace for your employees. However, it is also important to keep in mind that cleaning practices and products may also negatively impact on the environment.

Detergents, solvents, degreasers and other products contain a cocktail of substances that can impact on the health of freshwater and marine life, promote algal growth and disrupt the balance of sensitive ecosystems. Ensure that any waste water generated during cleaning does not enter the stormwater system. The stormwater system, unlike the sewer system, is not treated prior to being discharged into a creek, the harbour or ocean. Therefore always undertake activities involving detergents or other cleaning chemicals away from stormwater drains, roadside gutters or waterways.



**It is against the law to pollute water or place pollution in a position where it is likely to be blown, fall or leak into a drain, gutter or local waterway. The maximum penalty for companies is \$5 million. Ensure that you are aware of your legal responsibilities.**

You can keep your business premises clean, protect the environment and avoid costly fines by adopting the following actions:

- Be conservative with water when rinsing and ensure the waste water does not enter the stormwater system
- Store cleaning products in a secure and bunded area or bunded a cupboard.
- Keep lids on all solvents, cleaners and other chemicals, these will prevent the likelihood of spills and prevent odours and fumes from escaping into the air.
- When using odorous chemicals or solvents ensure there is adequate ventilation for the safety for your staff and customers.
- Dispose of all chemical and solvents appropriately. Never dispose of them down the stormwater drain.

**REMEMBER:** All waste water containing cleaning chemicals, including biodegradable detergents or other substances should be disposed of via the sewer system, not stormwater. For those businesses that regularly generate waste water from day to day operations, a Trade Waste Agreement from the Hunter Water Corporation may be required. In addition some form of treatment prior to discharge to the sewer may be a condition of the permit. For more information contact the Hunter Water Corporation.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

Hunter Water Corporation on 1300 657 657 or visit: [www.hunterwater.com.au](http://www.hunterwater.com.au)