

Paints and thinners contain a number of harmful substances that can pollute our environment and severely affect our waterways

## The Law

### The Polluter Pays

The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) is a law designed to protect our environment. In Auckland, it is illegal for any substance to be discharged into natural water, the stormwater system, land or air unless authorised by a resource consent or a district or regional plan. Polluters can be fined up to \$1,000, issued abatement notices, or prosecuted and fined up to \$600,000 for breaching the RMA.

**Landowners:** you are responsible for any work on your land. Make sure the contractor you hire knows how to do the job properly.

**Employers:** you are responsible for the actions of your staff. Make sure you train them well and give them the proper tools to do the job correctly.

**Workers:** you are responsible for doing the job in a manner that does not breach the environmental protections put in place by your employer. If you cause pollution, you and/or your company could be held liable for clean-up costs and/or penalties.



**Report all spills immediately to the Pollution Response Hotline on 09 377 3107**

Phone 09 301 0101 or visit [aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](http://aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)



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## Paint

### Preventing Pollution in Our Waterways



## What's the Problem?

### The effects of paint

Enamel, water, oil and lead-based paint are all substances that can cause serious harm to our environment. Paints may contain toxic solvents, heavy metals (such as lead, cadmium and mercury), and suspended solids.

Run-off of residential or commercial painting activities to the stormwater system directly affects our environment as it impacts local waterways and the organisms in them.



### Impacts include:

- Poisoning animals that drink water from the stream
- Restricting light entering a stream
- Smothering organisms, and clogging the gills and eyes of fish
- Reducing oxygen levels in waterways, making fish and shellfish unsuitable for consumption, and killing plant and animal aquatic life

## What Can You Do?

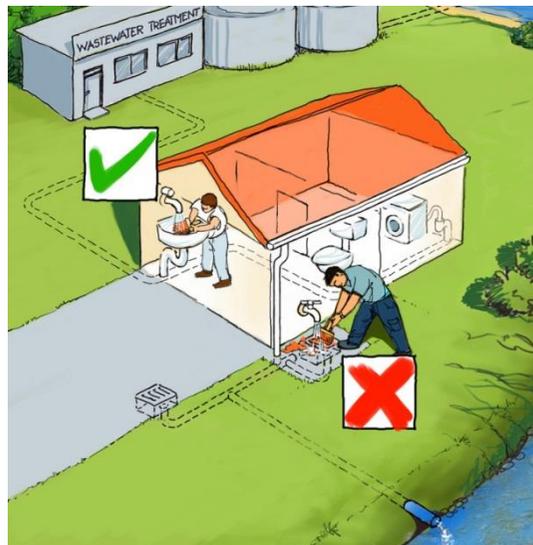
### Before you start works

- Cover and protect all stormwater drains at all times while you are painting
- Check the weather conditions before you paint and avoid painting in the rain
- Keep all painting tins and equipment well away from stormwater drains
- Used water-based paints wherever possible
- Buy only the quantity of paint that you will need

Store all your equipment inside so that residual paint cannot be washed off in the rain.

### Storing and disposing paint

Keep paint and solvent containers closed to prevent spillages and protect them from rainfall. Keep paints and thinner stored in a secure area to avoid vandalism. Recycle oil- and water-based paints by putting them back into their container. Dried paints can be put into the general rubbish.



## Cleaning equipment

Thinners and solvents cannot be disposed of into the sewer system. Filter out paint chips and re-use the paint, or dispose of at a hazardous waste facility.

Water-based paint equipment can be washed:

- in sinks that go to a municipal sanitary sewer system (not a septic system)
- on an unsealed surface such as a lawn or gravel

**Never** wash off paint where it will flow to a stormwater drain or natural watercourse if it rains.

Ensure that you leave the site clean and tidy, where all excess paint is removed and paint chips or residue are cleaned up. Never discharge any paint waste into the stormwater system.



### Remember

- Wash out water-based painting equipment to sinks, inside drains or unsealed ground
- Use drip trays when transferring or pouring paint
- Clean any spills immediately. Do not hose down to stormwater drains
- Clean up sanding dust and paint chips, and dispose to a bin
- Store all paints, thinners and other liquids in a secure, covered location