



Spills on Site



Introduction

Oil spills are a significant source of pollution. A fuel tank leak or oil spill can cause extensive soil, groundwater and watercourse contamination resulting in expensive clean-up costs. Reducing the risk of spills occurring is the most important step. However, if a spill does occur the correct procedure needs to be followed to reduce the impact.

(a) Know your site
Knowing where things are will mean you are better prepared in the event of a spillage.

Here are a few checks -

- Do you know...?**
- ✓ ...about the Oil Storage Regulations? (if not see appropriate Tool Box Talk)
 - ✓ ...who is the nominated person to deal with spills?
 - ✓ ...where the spill kit is stored?
 - ✓ ...how to use the spill kit?
 - ✓ ...where all the site drains are that could be polluted by a spill?
 - ✓ ...where all the watercourses are that could be affected by the site?
 - ✓ ...where the designated area for storage and plant refuelling is?
 - ✓ ...where the no smoking areas are?
 - ✓ ...where all the suitable fire extinguishers are?

(b) What to do if you encounter or cause a spill

1. Identify, if possible, the spilt material.
2. Stop the spill, but only if it is safe to do so, i.e. turn off the tap, stand the container up, etc.
3. Immediately notify the nominated member of staff that deals with spills.

(c) Dealing with a spill

You may have contacted the person that deals with spills but you can't just pass the responsibility on. Everybody needs to know what to do in the event of a spill.

1. Establish whether material is hazardous (COSHH)
2. Get help and assistance appropriate to the scale of the spill
3. Find out if anyone is injured and arrange help for them.
4. Wear suitable PPE as identified in the COSHH or risk assessment.
5. Identify where spill is likely to go, block or bund drains, etc.
6. Contain spilt material (see spill kits - page 2)
7. Use appropriate absorbent material to soak up spillage.
8. Place containment material in suitable bags or containers, correctly labelled.
9. Dispose of containers as Special Waste (see Waste Management Tool Box Talk)



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Spill Kits

- Every site should carry out the appropriate assessment for managing spills.
- Every site should have the appropriate equipment to deal with a spill.
- The equipment should be put together to form a 'spill kit'.
- The spill kit needs to be easily accessible for a quick response.
- The main contents should be a highly absorbent material, which will stop and clean up the spill.



OPTIONS - To decide which is the best spill kit for your site, you just need to know the potential size and impact of a spill. The choice is then up to individual sites.



PRE-PACKED SPILL KITS:

Spill kits can be purchased that contain all the equipment you need in a secure bin or bag. Different sizes can be purchased dependant on the potential size of the spill

See Parker's, 'Site Equipment and Supplies' catalogue.



MAKE YOUR OWN:

You can put together the equipment yourself. It all needs to be kept together, for example in a bin, and clearly labelled. Absorbent materials can be purchased from Parker's.

If the risk is small a bucket of sand may be enough, but do consider further precautions.



HOWEVER:

Make sure you understand how to use all the equipment in your spill kit. Otherwise there is no point having it!

Also, control measures should be proportional to risk. That is, excessive costs should not be entailed where there are only small risks - and vice-versa.

After the spill

1. What caused the spill? This is not a blame searching exercise, but leads to...
2. What lessons can be learnt from the incident? And...
3. What corrective actions (if any) are needed at the site?
4. Should the lessons learnt be communicated to other sites?

IMPORTANT

If you can not control the situation quickly with the equipment you have on site contact the emergency services.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

After appropriate action, your first contact should be your Site Environmental Co-ordinator or Site Management.