

Light Industry Program

Helping industry operators reduce the environmental impact of their business



What is the Light Industry Program?

The need to ensure heavy industry is tightly controlled to prevent environmental pollution has long been recognised. Many of these activities are considered to be Prescribed Premises and are licenced by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) with strict conditions. What has been less recognised historically is the risk of light industry.

According to the latest ABS figures 97% of businesses in WA are considered to be small businesses however they contribute up to \$48BN to the state economy annually. Although the environmental impact by an individual business may be minimal, the cumulative impact is potentially large. That is minor emissions by many small businesses add up to large problems.

Our Light Industry Inspection Program visits light industry businesses and checks how they use, store and dispose of solid and liquid materials, as well as how they control their air emissions. The program's objective is to educate industry in preventing industrial pollutants such as metals, hydrocarbons, paints, degreasers, detergents, sediment, plastics, noxious fumes and dust from reaching the environment.

The importance of this program

Protecting the environment has strong positive links to protecting public health so is a very important program for the City's Health Services and broader community.

Get in touch

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Our partnerships

The City works closely alongside other government agencies such as DWER, particularly their Contaminated Sites branch, Licencing branch and Pollution Response Unit as well as other agencies such as Water Corporation, Department of Health and other Local Authorities. This strong collaboration and information sharing ensures issues are able to be more promptly investigated and addressed as well as ensure a level of consistency regardless of jurisdiction.

What we find

We find most businesses are either already doing the right thing or are willing to improve their business practices to reduce the risk of causing environmental harm. For some they may be unaware of new technology or changes in legislation. For others our visit may be the final nudge required to get them to commit to undertaking an upgrade.

We understand light industry often has limited resources particularly with regards to staff and time and environmental management may not always be given a high priority in the day to day running of the business. Providing guidance and advice on how businesses can best meet their environmental responsibility is therefore the first step. Our preference is to work with businesses to make the necessary improvement with enforcement being a last option.



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Outcomes

Some businesses have committed significant amounts of money to upgrading their facilities, such as installing new vehicle wash down bays with improved oil collection technology. Businesses are able to commit to these high cost investments secure in the knowledge that the City's Inspection program will ensure a level playing field and they will not be economically disadvantaged by competitors not doing the right thing. We also understand some properties may be leased and require the property owner to commit to any upgrade. We are happy to liaise with the owner on your behalf or can suggest temporary measures which you can take with you should you relocate to a different property.

The old saying 'Prevention is better than cure' applies to many of life's situations and is particularly relevant here. The costs of cleaning up and disposing of contaminated stormwater and soil is significant, both financially and environmentally, so preventing it occurring in the first place is better than trying to clean up the consequences. Preventing hazardous or toxic material entering the environment is also better than trying to cure the possible health consequences that may result.

Some businesses have also experienced additional benefits following improvements in site conditions and work practices. Not only is the risk to the Environment minimised or reduce but the workplace has become a happier, safer more productive environment. Some businesses have even expressed to us the statement that they wish they had made the changes years ago.

Legislation requirements

Discharges to the environment are mainly regulated under the;

- Environmental Protection Act 1986
- Environmental Protection Regulations 19987
- Environmental Protection (unauthorised Discharges) Regulations 2004

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Other legislation requirements may also be applicable depending on your business activities and circumstances.

These may include;

- Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984
- Dangerous Goods Safety Act 2004
- Environmental Protection (Abrasive Blasting) Regulations 1998
- Environmental Protection (Controlled Waste) Regulations 2004
- Environmental Protection (Metal Coating) Regulations 2001
- Health (Treatment of Sewerage and Disposal of Effluent and Liquid Waste) Regulations 1974

Whilst we try and work with industry any unauthorised discharges into the environment may be in breach of legislation and subject to fines and enforcement action.

The inspection process

The City will undertake an inspection of your premises at a time convenient to you. We have developed a standard risk assessment inspection sheet in consultation with DWER and other Local Authorities to provide consistency between inspections. Inspections typically take less than an hour but will depend on the size of the premise and variety of activities undertaken.

Any issues of non-compliance will be discussed along with any recommendations or actions required to address any identified issues. If issues requiring rectification are identified a follow up inspection will be required to confirm actions have been completed.

Inspections of other businesses

Our inspection program will look at all light industry businesses that may be at risk of causing environmental pollution. However given the large number of premises it may take some time before all are inspected. If you have concern regarding a particular premises you may report your suspicions and any information you may have to the City. This will enable us to investigate the particular premises more promptly than may otherwise be the case.

Light Industry Program Environmental Self-assessment Sheet

To prepare for an environmental assessment at your business premises, use this checklist to identify areas and practices that may need attention.

Waste Water	Yes	No	N/A
Do you have a wash down bay for washing vehicles or equipment?			
Is your wash bay approved by your local government authority?			
Is waste water from your premises prevented from flowing to a stormwater drain or open ground?			
Do you use detergents or degreasers that are quick break?			
Do you have a sediment trap, grease trap or petrol/ oil separator, and are these devices maintained?			

Spray Painting/Abrasive Blasting	Yes	No	N/A
Is spray painting or abrasive blasting conducted in an enclosed booth?			

Sewer/Stormwater Connection	Yes	No	N/A
Is sewer available in your area?			
Is your premises connected to sewer?			
Do you have a trade waste permit to discharge waste water to sewer?			

Chemical and Waste Storage	Yes	No	N/A
Are chemicals and waste stored appropriately?			
Are chemicals and waste stored in covered, bunded areas?			
Is the bunded area adequate for the amount of material stored?			
Is controlled waste removed by a licensed controlled waste carrier?			
Are receipts for controlled waste removed kept and available for inspection?			
Do staff have access to personal protective equipment (PPE)?			
Are safety data sheets (SDSs) available? (SDSs provide workers and emergency personnel with procedures for safely handling specific substances– including information on toxicity, reactivity, first aid, disposal and spill-handling procedures).			
Are spill kits available and maintained?			
Are chemicals or waste stored on impervious ground and away from stormwater drains?			

Discharges to the Environment	Yes	No	N/A
Do your activities cause a discharge of dust?			
Do your activities cause a discharge of odour?			
Do your activities cause a discharge of smoke?			
Do your activities cause a discharge of vapour/ fumes?			
Do your activities cause unreasonable noise?			

Others	Yes	No	N/A
Are you polluting stormwater drains or the ground?			
Does your business require licensing under the Environmental Protection Act 1986?			