

## Pressure water blasting

Issued December 2010

*EPA 929/10: This information sheet is part of a series on environmental management practices for vessel and facility management on marine and inland waters. The information is extracted from the code of practice published in 2008.*

### Introduction

In the process of removing paint and aquatic fouling from vessels, heavy metals such as copper, zinc and tin may be released. These may then be consumed by shellfish, snails, worms and other bottom-dwelling organisms and passed up the food chain to fish, birds and humans. Heavy metals that are not incorporated into living tissue will remain in the sediments or water column, where they will increase the cost of dredged material disposal or result in the refusal for dredging approvals altogether. Aquatic fouling may also include invasive pest species.

### Who this applies to

- vessel operators
- slipway operators
- marina operators
- boat yard operators
- boat ramp operators
- boat and yacht club operators

### Operators must (required outcomes)

- 1 obtain environmental authorisations (an EPA licence) for prescribed activities of environmental significance
- 2 perform cleaning operations in designated cleaning areas with waste containment and wastewater controls (including spray drift)  
OR  
undertake measures to avoid pollution that reflect the risk of environmental harm from the activity being performed (refer to recommended practices for options)
- 3 comply with *Australian Standard AS 4361.1 Guide to lead paint management* for the removal of lead-based surface coatings.

### Operators should (recommended practices)

- 4 test for the presence of lead-based paints on all painted structures to be pressure water blasted where the type of paint is unknown
- 5 retain records of test paint samples
- 6 ensure pressure water blasting is only carried out during favourable wind conditions to prevent any fugitive emissions arising from the operation, creating a nuisance to any adjacent premises, the public or others
- 7 use high temperature water rather than chemicals for assisting with blasting operations

- 8 use durable and impermeable waterproof liners to prevent wastewater from escaping into the environment (which includes air, land and water) and to direct all wastewater runoff to a collection point
- 9 collect wastewater runoff from scaffolding structures
- 10 to prevent spray drift, use one or more of the following environmental management strategies:
  - locate moveable screens alongside and behind the operator
  - use tarpaulins, hessian and polythene sheeting or similar materials to confine overspray (material should be tear and UV resistant)
  - clad scaffolding in screens for open air cleaning.
- 11 utilise wastewater reuse technologies before relying on disposal options
- 12 provide customers or members with alternative water sources, such as rainwater or suitable recycled wastewater for use in pressure water blasting.

## **EPA licence requirements**

An EPA licence is required for pressure water blasting that involves the use of solvents, surfactants, acidic or caustic solutions, or the production of paint sludges and residues or any other materials listed in Part B of Schedule 1 of the *Environment Protection Act 1993* that is not lawfully disposed of to sewer. The addition of powdered material or grit will require a licence for abrasive blasting.

## **References**

EPA, *EPA Guideline: Pressure water blasting*, [www.epa.sa.gov.au/xstd\\_files/Waste/Guideline/guide\\_pressure.pdf](http://www.epa.sa.gov.au/xstd_files/Waste/Guideline/guide_pressure.pdf).

EPA, *Code of practice for vessel and facility management (marine and inland waters)*, [www.epa.sa.gov.au/xstd\\_files/Water/Code%20of%20practice/vessels.pdf](http://www.epa.sa.gov.au/xstd_files/Water/Code%20of%20practice/vessels.pdf).

## **Useful websites**

EPA Vessel and facility management pages, [www.epa.sa.gov.au/vfm](http://www.epa.sa.gov.au/vfm).

## **Disclaimer**

This publication is a guide only and does not necessarily provide adequate information in relation to every situation. This publication seeks to explain your possible obligations in a helpful and accessible way. In doing so, however, some detail may not be captured. It is important, therefore, that you seek information from the EPA itself regarding your possible obligations and, where appropriate, that you seek your own legal advice.

## Further information

### **Legislation**

Legislation may be viewed at: <[www.legislation.sa.gov.au](http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au)>

Copies of legislation are available for purchase from:

Service SA Government Legislation Outlet  
Adelaide Service SA Centre  
108 North Terrace  
Adelaide SA 5000

Telephone: 13 23 24  
Facsimile: (08) 8204 1909  
Website: <[shop.service.sa.gov.au](http://shop.service.sa.gov.au)>

### **For general information please contact:**

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