



Sector compliance report

Abrasive blasting

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Industry in South Australia



133 sites licensed by the EPA

45 sites inspected

88 recently inspected, inspection not required or not inspected due to location

What we found

270 total licence conditions assessed

39 breaches of total licence conditions

11 breaches of the general environmental duty (GED)

20 facilities had non-compliances

Most common non-compliance issues:

- Pollution control/complaints register not sited
- Bunding
- Dust management
- Wastewater management

86% compliance with licence conditions assessed.

Compliance & enforcement outcomes



1

Expiation issued



40

Licences require updated conditions



20

Direction letters

Introduction

This report presents the key findings of the EPA review of the compliance status of abrasive blasting licences in South Australia.

Inspections were conducted in 2020 on facilities undertaking 'Activity 2(1) Abrasive Blasting' in accordance with Schedule 1 of the *Environment Protection Act 1993* (EP Act).

Purpose

This report can be used by the abrasive blasting industry to understand the key compliance issues identified by the EPA and assist in improving the overall environmental performance of the sector.

Additionally, this report will provide the general community with information regarding the environmental compliance of the surface coating industry.

What is abrasive blasting

The abrasive blasting sector includes all industries that undertake the cleaning of materials by the abrasive action of any metal shot or mineral particulate.

The activity of abrasive blasting involves forcibly propelling a stream of abrasive material against a surface under high pressure to smooth a rough surface, roughen a smooth surface, shape a surface or remove surface contaminants, eg paint and rust.

The key environmental risks associated with abrasive blasting arise from dust generation from poorly maintained emissions capture systems, noise and the storage of liquids and waste.

In accordance with Schedule 1 of the EP Act, the abrasive blasting sector comprises of three activities:

- 2(1)(a) – Mobile
- 2(1)(b) – Fixed
- 2(1)(c) – Fixed and Mobile.

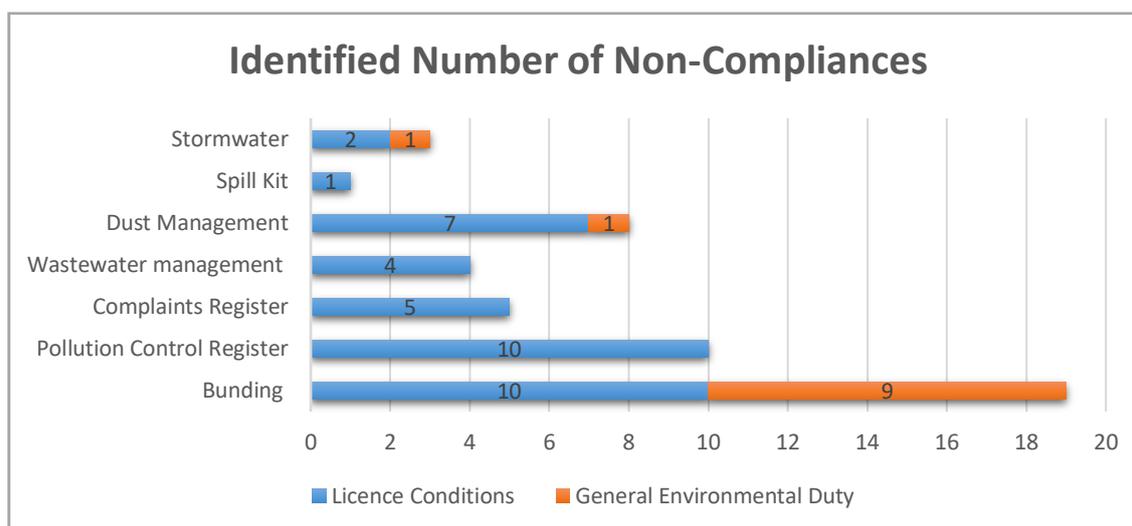
The EPA currently licences 133 facilities in South Australia that carry out abrasive blasting activities as defined under the EP Act. These sites are located throughout the state with the majority in the metropolitan Adelaide area.

Compliance and enforcement outcomes

EPA Authorised Officers inspected 45 abrasive blasting facilities to assess compliance of their activities according to their licence conditions. In total, 270 licence conditions were assessed across the 45 inspected sites.

The inspections identified 20 licensees had a total of 39 non-compliances in relation to current licence conditions, with nine having multiple licence condition breaches. In addition, seven facilities were found to be non-compliant with 11 breaches of the general environmental duty (GED) of the EP Act.

A summary of the identified non-compliance that includes both licence conditions and general environmental duty is documented in the following figure.



The most common environmental issues found during inspection were:

- **Ineffective management of dust:** Non-compliance involved ineffective pollution control infrastructure and/or evidence of dust impacts to the local environment. Dust may contaminate soil or waters and have an impact on the neighbouring land users.
- **Failure to maintain registers:** Identified breaches were of an administrative nature, such as registers not in place for the maintenance of pollution control equipment or registers to capture complaints. It is important for licensees to capture information over time in order to ensure they review the issues and make continuous improvements.
- **Inappropriate storage of liquid chemicals (bunding):** Non-compliance involved small amounts of chemicals not being contained in an appropriate bund. If a container is spilled and chemicals are not contained, they may contaminate soil or possibly groundwater (for larger spills).

Following the inspections, 20 directions letters were issued from the EPA that identified the breach/s of licence or GED condition, and outlined action list and timelines required for the licensee to undertake in order to become fully compliant with their licence conditions. In addition, one licensee received an expiation for contravening a licence condition. It is expected that all of these licensees will take actions to comply, to avoid further regulatory action.

The EPA also identified 40 abrasive blasting licences will require alterations to conditions which will lead to robust licence conditions that are easier to understand, more appropriate to the activity, and consistent across the sector.

Future actions

- All sites inspected will require licence conditions to be updated to reflect the risks associated with the work being undertaken. Conditions on many abrasive blasting licences will be updated to assist to achieve greater consistency in regulation of the abrasive blasting industry.
- The EPA will continue to monitor these actions and licensees, and take further regulatory action for any ongoing non-compliance.

Further information

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