



POLLUTION REPORTING & RESPONSE

Unpermitted releases of oils, sewage, silts and chemicals into our waterways occur each year, causing pollution. These can cause a range of impacts, including a reduction in amenity (discoloured water and/or bad smells), effects on fish and other wildlife, and occasionally harm to human health. Some pollution incidents may be long-lasting and cause widespread effects by spilling into adjoining watercourses; they may also significantly affect our customers' enjoyment and use of waterways, especially for water supply, angling, or boating. Therefore, it is vital that we react quickly when pollution is reported. Major pollution incidents are usually managed by the Environment Agency or Natural Resources Wales, with support from our Waterway, Environment, Fisheries and Water Management Teams. However, we are often the first to be notified and respond to pollution incidents.



Paint / chemical spill entering waterway via drain



Oil pollution (contained by first response)

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I OBSERVE OR RECEIVE A REPORT OF POLLUTION ?

All pollution incidents should be reported immediately to the local Waterway Team and local Environment Team. If you see pollution, or receive a report of pollution, please try to obtain and/or pass on the following information so that our teams can respond quickly and effectively:

- Observer's name & contact number
- Waterway (canal or river) or reservoir affected by the incident
- Location of incident (e.g. number of nearest lock / bridge /road or other distinguishing feature)
- Whether the observer knows what the pollution is or where it is coming from
- The appearance of the pollution (surface film, colour, odour, etc.)
- The extent of the pollution (area affected)
- Whether the observer noticed any distressed or dead fish, birds or animals affected by the pollution
- Whether the observer has reported the incident to the Environment Agency or Natural Resources Wales.

Environmental Toolbox Talk – Pollution Response

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO A POLLUTION ?

In general, the local Waterway Team will provide the first response to a pollution, as detailed below. The Environment Team will liaise with the Waterway, other internal teams and the regulators to identify pollutants and provide information on safe handling and disposal.

1. **SAFETY** – try to **identify the pollutant** and **put on appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)**; if the spill is flammable **extinguish all sources of ignition**; **secure the site** to keep customers away from the spill.
 - a. Chemical spills might be identified through product labelling or a site chemical inventory.
 - b. COSHH assessments can be obtained from the H&S Advisor to help you understand the risks.
2. **STOP AND CONTAIN**– if safe to do so, attempt to **determine the spill source and take action to stop it** at source; attempt to **contain the spill where possible** to prevent the further spread or **divert it away from watercourses**
 - a. On land use an earth/sand bund or granules; on water use absorbent booms or skirted (fence) booms for oil spills and pads for fuel.
3. **REPORT** – **contact your Supervisor or local Environment Team** who will provide further advice & liaise with other teams and the Environment Agency or Natural Resources Wales.
 - a. It may be necessary to deploy aerators or a pump, following advice from the Fisheries team, if fish are gasping in the waterway.
 - b. If it is obvious where the pollution is coming from, the Environment Team, with assistance from the regulator, may pursue the polluter to clean up.
4. **CLEAN UP** – if appropriate **clean up the spill**, using absorbent pads / granules.
 - a. The correct spill pads should be used - chemical absorbent pads are not suitable for oil as they sink beneath the surface of the water.
 - b. Large pools of oil or spills which cannot be absorbed will need to be removed by gully sucker – contact your local Contracts Supervisor or Environmental Scientist to arrange an appropriate contractor.
5. **DISPOSE AND REPLENISH** – **dispose of all contaminated materials** (including booms/pads, liquids, fish and PPE) correctly; **ensure that the pollution response equipment is replaced** as soon as possible.
 - a. Contaminated materials may be classified as hazardous waste – contact the local Environmental Scientist for advice.
 - b. Store hazardous wastes securely and contact your Contracts Supervisor or Environmental Scientist to arrange separate disposal.



Pollution response equipment

Further information and support on pollution reporting & response plans is available from your local Environment Team.