

# INDUSTRY RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

## *Contaminant Release Mitigation at Automotive Service Centers*

### **What are some potential contaminant sources?**

By their very nature, automotive service centers use equipment or have structures built into their property that without proper maintenance could result in a release of regulated fluids to the soil or ground water. A release could negatively impact human health and the environment, impair your brand and cost you money!

If a release does occur, consider reviewing your local, State and Federal reporting obligations. Performing routine inspections of your interior, exterior and waste storage areas will help to identify and address any potential issues before a release occurs.

It is critical that observation and maintenance of specific equipment be conducted to avoid a release. If a few simple practices are incorporated into your shop's best practices, it could save you THOUSANDS!

Examples of potential contaminant sources in a typical automotive service center include:

- Floor drains and tire wash
- Oil/water separators or sand/sediment traps
- Fluid transport lines (antifreeze, used motor oil, new motor oil, hydraulic fluid, hydraulic lubricant)
- Air compressor "blow down" (oil-laden air)
- Parts cleaners (solvents/degreasers) releases
- Hydraulic lifts (in-ground fluid tanks and air lines)

### **INDUSTRY RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:**

#### **Floor Drains and Tire Wash:**

NEVER discharge any liquid except water into these drains. Assure that water from floor drains and tire wash station flow freely and does not "back up." If the drain is so equipped, clean the sediment strainer frequently to ensure full flow. If a drain does "back up," contact a licensed plumber and/or vacuum waste hauler to evacuate the drain lines and restore flow.

### **Oil/Water Separators and Sand/Sediment Traps:**

- Verify the outlet location that the flow of drain water moves to, through and from the separator. On a semi-annual or annual frequency, have the separator contents vacuumed out and disposed of properly. If the separator “backs up” or otherwise drains slowly, have the separator serviced immediately. If the separator contents do not flow, consider dye testing and/or pipeline cameras to evaluate drain line competency.

### **Fluid Transport Lines:**

- Monitor above ground fluid transport lines to ensure they are not perforated and leaking their contents.
- Maintain sufficient dry absorbent/spill kits supply within 25 feet of the lines for emergency spills.
- Educate workers in the affected area to apply absorbent, collect used absorbent (broom and shovel), and place the materials into a labeled, sealed, waterproof container for transport (under manifest) to an off-site recycling facility.
- Repair/replace lines at manufacturer/industry-recommended intervals.

### **Air Compressor Blowdown:**

- Conduct regular visual inspection of air compressors for evidence of “blowdown” oil on the ground surface.
- Collect and containerize oil residue from “blowdown” and transfer it for off-site disposal.
- Consider installing a dehumidifier in the compressor system to reduce water vapor within the process.
- Perform manufacturer-recommended maintenance on the compressors.
- If parts are defective or the compressor becomes inoperable, take it out of service immediately and make repairs.
- Consider the use of “oil-less” compressors to avoid the occurrence of “blowdown.”

### **Parts Cleaners:**

- Locate all parts cleaners and storage vessels well away from bay floor drains or other drains that may lead to a storm, sanitary or natural discharge.
- Inspect parts cleaners (and floor around them) and solvent storage vessels regularly for cracks, breaks, and content leakage.
- Do not allow any quantity of solvent liquids to accumulate on the floor surface.
- Collect and remove all solvents from the floor for off-site disposal.
- Maintain dry absorbent/spill kits within 25 feet of the cleaners and vessels for emergency spills. Train workers in the immediate area to respond to spills in a timely manner.

### **Hydraulic Lifts:**

- Evaluate hydraulic lift performance (both with and without car/truck weight) of each individual lift and document fluid addition (both volume and frequency) required for lift performance.
- Immediately notify management when lifts require additional fluid to operate.
- If a lift fails, lockout/tagout the lift and immediately have a manufacturer-approved technician perform repairs.
- Remember that the Automotive Lift Institute (ALI) requires annual inspections by third parties of hydraulic lifts.

**WHEN REFERENCING THIS RECOMMENDATION, BE SURE TO FOLLOW ALL FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS RELATING TO THIS SUBJECT.**