



# Tool Box Talk

Focus on Performance

## Working Near Water

Sust. 02

### What?

Watercourses, and the plants and animals they support, are vulnerable to pollution from chemicals oils or silt. Working adjacent to or in watercourses can also cause flooding and affect the availability of water downstream.

### Why?

It is an offence to cause or knowingly allow pollution of a watercourse. As well as the potential for unlimited fines or even imprisonment in extreme cases, the polluter will always have to pay for any clean up operation. Construction in or adjacent to a watercourse may require a licence.

### How?

The following actions should be implemented on site to ensure watercourses are not negatively affected by construction activities:

- Do not store fuel or chemicals adjacent to a watercourse unless they are within a bunded area or other suitable protection is in place.
- Wherever possible take plant to a refuelling point away from watercourses.
- Use drip trays for static plant.
- Report leaky valves or pipes immediately.
- Never allow concrete or mortar wash out in or near a watercourse; the resulting wash water is highly alkaline and can kill fish and other aquatic animals.
- Check watercourses regularly for any significant changes or signs of pollution such as a visible oily sheen, discoloured water or dead fish
- Protect fuel and chemical stores against acts of vandalism by using locks and storing away hoses and nozzles.
- Prevent rubbish and timber from entering the water by good housekeeping measures.
- Never pump silty water directly into a watercourse without permission - a licence is required.
- Never block watercourses, track plant across or alter banks without permission - a licence is required.
- Report all incidents and any potential hazards to your supervisor.



### Questions

1. What should we do if we notice any changes in the condition of the water?
2. Who pays for the clean up operation?
3. Why can concrete affect a watercourse?

If you have any queries regarding the content of this tool box talk please contact your Sustainability Advisor or Line Manager.