

Tool Box Talk No.2

Ground Contamination



A major area of environmental concern is related with the potential contamination of the earth. Unlike the pollution of surface watercourses, ground contamination has a potentially long-term impact and can be a problem even after work is completed

Small spills can, over a long period of time can accumulate to become a major problem with far reaching effects.

Health problems can be traced to contaminated sites and this could lead ultimately to prosecution and the responsibility to clean up the land.

Ground contamination originates from poor storage, handling and disposal of chemicals and fuel. Even the smallest spill can have an impact on the local area and it is those small spills that can accumulate and cause major environmental problems.

All these problems can be avoided by using good control techniques inclusive of the following points:

- Maintain a general practice of good housekeeping.
- Dispose of all waste types into the appropriate containers.
- Be aware of the problem of ground contamination and take appropriate action when required.
- Report any spills immediately and take action using clean up facilities if necessary.
- Tanks must have adequate bunding around them 110% capacity of the storage tank / container itself.
- Containers and barrels containing substances such as petroleum, oil or chemicals must be returned to the correct storage area at the end of any working day.
- Any open containers must be covered to avoid potential spills and vandalism.
- Dispose of empty containers and drums in the correct waste facilities as they always retain some liquid and could cause ground contamination.

By keeping to these guidelines, material loss can be minimised as can the threat of ground contamination, the workplace will also be kept cleaner. It is you as an individual that is responsible for taking care when using materials, for Safety, Health and Environmental reasons.

Your actions not only have repercussions on yourself but also on the environment and just as importantly other people.

Brief discussion point

Where does ground contamination originate from?

“SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK, ALWAYS”