



# Motor Trade Association of SA Environmental Fact Sheet

## SOLVENTS

### Environmental impact of solvents

If released into the atmosphere or waterways solvents have a significant negative impact on the environment.

Solvents, thinners and gunwash are used in the refinishing industry they are all classified as volatile organic compounds VOCs, leading to photochemical smog which is formed when air pollutants react under the influence of sunlight.

Smog harms the environment and people. Smog can cause irritation to peoples eyes and respiratory tracts. People with asthma and respiratory problems are especially vulnerable.

### Recycling Solvents

Solvent thinners can be recycled in-house.

Recycling solvents could potentially save thousands of dollars every year by reducing purchase and disposal costs.

### How do solvent recyclers work?

Solvent recyclers distill paint-contaminated solvents into clean re-useable solvents.

The solvent is boiled and the vaporised solvent passes through a condenser where it is cooled, the clear cool recycled liquid produced is then collected in a suitable solvent container.

The waste product (solid paint) can be disposed of to general waste.

Most suppliers of these systems can help you to calculate the payback period on the solvent recycling systems.

Ensure that solvent distilling takes place in a well ventilated area away from ignition sources such as machinery and equipment.

### Any questions call the MTA

Carly Roworth  
Environmental Project Officer  
Motor Trade Association of SA Inc (MTA)  
T: 08 8291 2000  
E: [environment@mta-sa.asn.au](mailto:environment@mta-sa.asn.au)

**The Green Stamp Plus Programme is a joint initiative of MTA-SA and the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.**