



# Environmental Management System

For the motor trade



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## **Introduction**

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An Environmental Management System (EMS) is a simple method of setting out guidelines to ensure that your businesses impact on the environment is reduced. This booklet will provide you with a step by step guide on how to implement an Environmental Management System within your business.

An Environmental Management System will not only increase awareness of environmental issues and how they relate to your business but will also help you take the next step in implementing better practices. An EMS is a useful tool to help you work towards and comply with the relevant regulations and laws.

Today, society has a great interest in environmentally friendly practices. By establishing your own Environmental Management System you will be able to promote your business and be recognised for your environmentally friendly initiatives. An EMS can also help identify areas where money can be saved through practices such as recycling, reducing energy and decreasing water usage.

An Environmental Management System is suitable for small, medium and large businesses. It is important that you get staff involved and explain to them the importance of following the environmental policy and reducing the business' impact on the environment. You may be surprised by some of their ideas.

Using this step by step guide you will soon have an Environmental Management System in place. Do not feel restricted by the guidelines, instead develop and modify them to create an Environmental Management System that suits your business.

The first step in developing an Environmental Management System for your business is to develop a policy. The policy needs to outline what your business and staff are committed to. It is important that you are complying with regulations and laws and this should be stated within the policy.

You can use the following sample policy, filling in your business name and signing it, or you can modify and develop your own policy. Once the policy has been developed and signed it should be displayed within the workplace preferably where customers will be able to see it.

## **Our Environmental Commitment Policy**

..... is committed to managing all our operations in an environmentally responsible manner at all times. We care about the environment, and we ask our customers to do the same.

To ensure environmentally responsible behaviour is accepted as an integral part of our operations, we specifically undertake to:

- Establish an Environmental Management System to help reduce our impact on the environment
- Comply with environmental regulations, licences and legislation
- Prevent pollution occurring from our activities and operations
- Recycle and correctly dispose of all waste products
- Minimise water usage
- Educate our employees on their environmental responsibilities and integrate it into their work practices, training and decision making
- Continuously improve the environmental performance of our company

Signed .....

Position .....

Date .....

### **Identifying Environmental Impacts**

Once you have developed your policy and are committed to making a positive change within your business, you need to identify all aspects of the business that are impacting on the environment. An environmental impact can be caused by any equipment, procedures or behaviour that harms the environment. For example contaminating soil or water, polluting the air or excessive use of resources such as energy and water are ways your business may impact the environment.

To determine how your business is having an impact on the environment, you will need to conduct a general inspection of the workplace using a method of auditing such as an auditing survey or Ecomapping. See Appendix B and Appendix C for more information.

When conducting an environmental audit of your premises key areas of concern would include:

- **Storm water** – Check where stormwater are and if they are or could be contaminated by waste water or chemicals such as oil and coolant.
- **Energy** – Observe how the business uses power and lighting and determine where you could be more efficient or reduce the power used. Changes that could be made include, installing energy efficient globes or turning off air compressors after hours.
- **Trade Waste** – Ensure that trade waste is stored appropriately and is collected / recycled by a licensed contractor.
- **Wastewater** – Check that a separator is being used and maintained so that oil is removed from wastewater before it is disposed of. Waste also needs to be removed.
- **Additional Impacts** – Try to determine if there are any other impacts. For example noise / air pollution, soil contamination or major spills.

Once you have identified the impact your business is having on the environment you need to assess the risk associated with each impact. This can be done by determining the likelihood of the impact taking place and the consequences associated with it. This provides a way to prioritise the order in which each impact is addressed. You can rely on commonsense, however if you are uncertain use the following table to provide you with guidance on the urgency of addressing issues that arise.

		Consequence of Impact			
		<b>Catastrophic</b>	<b>Critical</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>Minor</b>
Probability of Occurrence	<b>Frequent</b>	Urgent	Urgent	High	Medium
	<b>Occasional</b>	Urgent	High	Medium	Low
	<b>Remote</b>	High	Medium	Low	Low
	<b>Unlikely</b>	Medium	Medium	Low	Very Low

**Probability of Occurrence**

**Frequent:** The impact on the environment occurs daily, weekly or most of the year

**Occasional:** The impact on the environment occurs over weeks or months

**Remote:** The impact occurs rarely over a year or two

**Unlikely:** The impact is not likely to take place.

**Consequence of Impact**

**Catastrophic:** The impact would result in permanent damage to the environment

**Critical:** The impact would cause serious damage but be repairable

**Major:** The impact would require considerable time to repair

**Minor:** The impact only has a minor effect on the environment

**Corrective Action Required:**

**Urgent:** Immediate corrective action should be taken

**High:** Implement corrective action within 1 month

**Medium:** Implement corrective action within a period of 1-3 months

**Low:** Implement corrective action within a period of 1-6 months

**Example: The Compressor Noise**

Noise from the compressor occurs frequently and has a minor impact therefore it is of medium priority and should be addressed within 1-3 months. If not addressed this could result in complaints from customers and neighbours and the EPA could become involved.

Once you have assessed your business and have identified issues that need to be addressed, the next step is to determine the actions you will take to eliminate or reduce the impact they are having on the environment.

You can try to do the following:

- **Eliminate:** Control the cause of impact by removing it
- **Substitute:** Replace for something with a lesser impact
- **Engineer:** Install protective measures
- **Administer:** Implement policies and procedures to reduce the likelihood of the impact occurring

Once you have determined what actions you will take the next step is to determine the best methods for correcting these areas of concern. This may involve changing procedures or redesigning the workshop for increased efficiency and environmental compliance.

To ensure that you are compliant with the legislation and laws you should obtain information or the areas that relate to your business. Information can be obtained from a number of sources including the Motor Trade Association, The Green Stamp Plus Website, your local council or the EPA.

<b>Example: The Compressor Noise</b>	
<b>Eliminate:</b>	Cannot eliminate.
<b>Substitution:</b>	Could install a modern compressor if feasible.
<b>Engineering:</b>	Engineering controls such as putting a silencer on the exhaust, fixing leaks in the lines or fitting rubber dampeners on manufacturer's recommendations.
<b>Administration:</b>	Switch off when not in use, contact MTA/VACC for assistance, use a timer use to minimise impact on neighbours and staff where practical, provide protective equipment for staff.

The final step in the Environmental Management System once you have eliminated or reduced the environmental impacts your business is having, is to monitor your business regularly. This could be done by conducting regular checks which will help to identify areas that need improving as well as any new impacts that are occurring. The findings of these regular checks should be documented and a responsible person should be allocated, to carry out the action within a specified time (See Appendix D for schedule).

In order to gain insight into issues from employee's monthly tool box meetings should be conducted. Five to ten minutes is all that is needed to allow staff to bring up any concerns about environmental impacts that are observed.

A responsible person should also be appointed to authorise purchases to improve environmental practices if required.

When making changes check to ensure that they do not require council approval from a planning officer or building inspector but if so prepare accordingly.

Records should be kept of every tool box meeting as per attachment and follow up on what has been done at each monthly tool box meeting. Prepare monthly reports on the results of inspections of premises.

- Develop an Environmental Management Policy for the business
- Provide a copy to employees
- Display policy in the workplace
  
- Determine environmental impacts of the business (survey or Ecomapping)
- Ask employees what they think needs to be addressed
- Consider any other operations or actions that have an environmental impact
- Determine the legal requirements that need to be followed
  
- Assess the risk of the environmental impacts occurring
- Determine the degree of the impacts
- Determine the frequency of the impacts
  
- Determine the corrective actions that need to take place
- Allocate these actions to a responsible person
- Use the risk associated with each impact to determine the time frame in which these problems need to be addressed. A high risk is an urgent priority
  
- Develop a procedure for regular checks of environmental impacts of your business
- Conduct a regular audit of the system
- Review and improve old procedures
- Implement new procedures as additional impacts are discovered or introduced to the business
- Keep a record of the reviews and any changes that are made

**Ecomapping**

Eco Mapping is an easy DIY method of identifying environmental issues within the workplace. It involves using a basic floor plan of your premises and highlighting processes and equipment that may cause harm to the environment.

The MTA has worked with the EPA to develop an Ecomapping tool which will address the specific issues associated with the motor trade. Ecomapping guidelines and CD's are available from the MTA. For more information contact the MTA Environmental Project Officer.

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As part of the environmental program Green Stamp Plus, the MTA is providing members with the opportunity to have an environmental audit undertaken free of charge. This audit or environmental check will provide you with information on areas of your business that you could improve. An environmental audit can also provide a good starting point for your business to further develop an environmental management system. All information obtained from an environmental audit is completely confidential. The aim of this program is to educate and aid members in being environmentally responsible.

Do it yourself environmental auditing surveys are available from the Green Stamp Plus website at [www.greenstampplus.com.au](http://www.greenstampplus.com.au)

For any more information on do it yourself auditing systems or to arrange an environmental audit with the MTA contact the MTA Environmental Project Officer.

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