

# Information Sheet – When to Notify the EPA

General Environmental Duty – a legal and ethical obligation to protect the environment by minimising harm.

**About:** In Victoria, under the Environment Protection Act 2017, any hydraulic fluid spill on a construction site that causes or threatens to cause material harm to human health or the environment is classified as a notifiable incident.

## Why it matters:

- **Risk to people & environment:** Hydraulic fluid is toxic to soil, waterways, and wildlife; fast action reduces health, safety, and ecological impacts.
- **Documented evidence:** Accurate, timely records of the spill and notifications prove due diligence and support any subsequent investigation.
- **Everyone's responsibility:** All workers and contractors on-site share the duty to raise the alarm—don't assume someone else has reported it.

This includes spills that are uncontrolled, involve hazardous substances, or require significant cleanup efforts.

## When to Notify EPA Victoria: <https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/report-pollution-incident>

You must report a hydraulic spill if:

- The spill is uncontrolled or unplanned and could cause material harm.
- The substance is harmful to water or land in large quantities.
- The substance is dangerous or toxic and threatens the environment or people.
- The cleanup cost is estimated to be \$10,000 or more.

Even if the spill is contained on-site, if it poses a threat to human health or the environment, it must be reported.

## Who Must Report:

The person responsible for the activity that caused the spill, or anyone who becomes aware of the incident, is obligated to notify EPA Victoria. This duty applies as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the incident.

## How to Report:

- For immediate threats, call **000** to report to emergency services.
- For other notifiable incidents, contact EPA Victoria at **1300 372 842** or email [contact@epa.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@epa.vic.gov.au)

## Additional Obligations:

Beyond notification, you are required to:

- Take immediate action to prevent or reduce harm.
- Clean up and restore the affected area as far as reasonably practicable.
- Review and, if necessary, update your risk management controls and emergency response plans.

For comprehensive guidance, refer to EPA Victoria's [Civil Construction, Building and Demolition Guide](#), which outlines best practices for managing environmental risks on construction sites.

If you need assistance with developing spill response plans or selecting appropriate containment equipment, feel free to ask.