This information aims to assist owners, managers and staff of retail food businesses, cafés and restaurants in complying with their general environmental duty by preventing pollutants generated by their activities from entering the environment.

**BENEFITS FOR YOU AND YOUR BUSINESS**

You can improve the public image of your business and minimise the risk of environmental fines and prosecutions by complying with the Environment Protection Act 1997 (the Act) and the Environment Protection Regulation 2005.

**WHAT THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ACT 1997 (THE ACT) MEANS TO YOU**

Some activities associated with retail food businesses, cafés and restaurants can potentially pollute the environment. Think about your work practices and how they might impact on land, water, air and noise. It could be as simple as adopting good housekeeping practices.

**STORMWATER MANAGEMENT**

Stormwater drains are designed to collect water during rain events. Stormwater and road drains empty to our creeks, lakes and rivers without treatment. The Act aims to protect our aquatic environments by keeping stormwater as clean as possible.

> Keep the footpath, gutter and external areas near your business free from litter. Do not sweep litter, leaves or anything else into gutters or drains. Take pride in your business and is contribution to the local community by collecting waste left on the footpath or in the gutter and disposing of it appropriately.

> Ensure that rainwater from guttering and all unroofed areas is directed to the stormwater system and not to the sewer. Illegal connections of stormwater to the sewer can result in overflows of raw sewage that can harm waterways.

> Ensure that uncontaminated rainwater is directed away from potentially contaminated areas, such as storage and washing areas. As an example, use speed humps to direct rainwater away from potentially contaminated areas.

> Design food delivery and food handling areas in a manner which does not allow waste materials to be washed into the stormwater system.

> Ensure greasy wastewater from cleaning and food preparation is discharged to the sewer. Your business will require a trade waste permit from Icon Water to discharge wastewater to the sewer. Contact 02 6248 3111 for more information.

> Ensure that internal drains on your premises drain to the sewer (with Icon Water approval), not to stormwater drains.

> Ensure that grease traps are regularly inspected and maintained.

> Ensure that all personnel employed on your premises can clearly identify the drains which enter the stormwater system and are aware of their environmental responsibilities.

> Garbage storage areas that are uncovered and unprotected from the weather can cause stormwater pollution, as waste and litter can be washed or blown into drains. Placing substances such as oil or chemicals in an area where it may enter the stormwater system could result in on-the-spot fines or other penalties.

> Managers of roofed garbage storages should:

  - connect all drainage from the garbage storage area to the sewer (with Icon Water approval)
  - use a physical barrier such as bunding or cut-off drains to ensure there is no discharge from the garbage area to the stormwater system and
  - clean up garbage spills outside the bunded area by dry sweeping, not by washing down with water. (You must comply with ACT NOWaste Development Control Code for Best Practice Waste Management in the ACT. Contact ACT NOWaste on 13 22 81.)
Managers of unroofed garbage storages should:

- ensure nothing is cleaned or washed in garbage hopper storage areas
- install a physical barrier such as a silt pit before discharge to the stormwater system and clean as necessary and
- where no wash-out provisions or sewer connection is provided, a sign should be erected within the enclosure which clearly states that no water from washing of waste and recyclable containers should be discharged into the stormwater system. Washing of waste and recyclable containers can be carried out only at a location where waste is discharged to sewer. (You must comply with ACT NOWaste Development Control Code for Best Practice Waste Management in the ACT. Contact ACT NOWaste on 13 22 81.

Where there is outdoor storage of liquids such as cooking oil:

- keep the oil drums under cover in a bunded area within the property to contain any leaks or spills;
- keep a lid on the oil drums and lock the lid;
- secure the drums so they cannot be pushed over (in case of vandals); and
- keep clearly labelled spill clean up material in an accessible area ready for use and educate staff what to do in case of a spill.

Build waste and recycling storage areas from a solid, waterproof material with a smooth concrete floor.

Locate storage areas as close as possible to the main food preparation area (subject to health requirements).

Fix notes or signs to the doors or walls of all garbage storage areas to explain recycling, handling, cleaning and spill procedures to staff.

Arrange regular waste collections by approved waste contractors.

AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The Act also aims to ensure that air quality in the ACT meets national standards and to minimise environmental harm from local emission of air pollutants. Odours and fumes may also affect your neighbours.

There are some simple ways in which you can improve the quality of air being ducted from your frying equipment and grillers:

- Install appropriate filtering equipment for exhaust ducts.
- Use a recognised, commercial filter-cleaning service to regularly remove and clean the filters in your range hood.
- Develop a regular maintenance schedule. Keep records of maintenance performed.

For more information, refer to the Environment Protection Authority’s Odour Management in Retail Food Businesses Information Sheet.

NOISE MANAGEMENT

Certain activities can generate levels of noise ranging from being a nuisance to actually damaging people’s health. The Act aims to protect people from undue noise whilst enabling them to carry out business and social activities.

Retail food businesses can be a source of noise nuisance to nearby residents, especially during extended trading hours. Don’t allow noise from your business to annoy neighbours.

- Restrict the movements of delivery trucks and garbage trucks to business hours, particularly trucks with refrigeration units.
- Regularly check and service external equipment such as air conditioners, generators and ventilation systems. Where possible, enclose these units, have noise barriers erected around them or turn them away from adjoining residences. It is advisable that you seek advice from an acoustic consultant when trying to reduce noise.
- Be courteous of neighbouring residents particularly during early morning set up and late night clean up.

For more information regarding noise please refer to the Noise in Residential Areas Information Sheet.
LEGAL REQUIREMENTS
Under the Act it is an offence for a person to allow any substance other than rainwater to enter the stormwater system. Contraventions of the Act can lead to a fine of up to $175 for an individual and $875 for a company. For more serious offences, penalties may exceed $10,000.

In the case of excessive noise a complaint may be lodged with the EPA. A complaint regarding noise pollution will be considered by the EPA only if it is made by a person affected by the noise. The EPA will undertake an investigation which may include issuing a warning letter or on-the-spot fine, or, depending on the circumstances, an Environment Protection Order. If the noise continues to be a problem, it is a serious offence and could lead to prosecution in court.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Contact Access Canberra on 13 22 81.
Go to www.act.gov.au/accessCBR for more information relating to your industry.
Odour Management in Retail Food Businesses
Noise in Residential Areas
Licensed Premises