

How to clean up and remediate a spill on a pond

Spills of oils, fuels and similar products (such as vegetable oils) can find their way into run-off ponds, collection dams or sumps. The spill may have been directed via a storm water drain or flushed through an oil/water separator accidentally. Either way, this results in contamination of the water body.

It is important to deal with a spill as soon as possible, before further damage occurs. A spill can escape a confined area due to a wind change, the rise and fall of the tide, or simply by seepage into the soil.

The four steps of a spill clean up are:

1. Control the spill
2. Contain the spill
3. Clean up the spill
4. Remediation

Firstly, before attempting any spill clean up, ensure the area is safe to enter. Be aware of fumes and approach from upwind.

Secondly, ensure personal protection equipment is worn. Attach safety lines to personnel if entering the water.

CONTROL:

The spill must be contained in an area that is suitable for the recovery and clean up operation. Prevent the spill from entering drains, sewage systems, pipes and cable ducts to avoid risk of explosion or further contamination of the environment.

CONTAIN:

Use booms to surround the spill and bring it in to the clean up site. Remember to join booms before deploying them. Drag the booms slowly from one end of the pond to the other, with the wind. The spill can be covered and absorbed using an organic absorbent such as Global Peat. The absorbents will encapsulate the spill, preventing any birds and wildlife from contamination.

CLEAN UP:

Use oil-selective absorbent pads, rolls and other materials to absorb the spill. All absorbent material needs to be collected for disposal. A pool scoop is handy to reclaim absorbent peat. If it is a very large spill, a mechanical recovery device such as a skimmer may be used or hired. Suction from a tanker may also assist to recover a spill once it is contained into a small area.

REMEDIATION:

Spray any contaminated soil around the edge of the pond with hydrocarbon-eating bacteria. This assists the natural degradation of any hydrocarbons still present in the soil, however it is unlikely the microbes will be effective below 300mm. Tilling the soil will improve penetration and oxygenation. Spray the surface of the pond if any slick remains.

Spill training courses are available for further in-depth instruction.



Booms contain the spill, absorbent peat encapsulates the spill.

