

## It's the law

Proper storage, handling and disposal of PERC solvent or waste is a legal responsibility for all dry cleaners.

## High penalties apply

Failing to do so not only harms the environment, heavy penalties can apply to businesses that don't comply:

- Up to **\$5,000,000** or a seven-year jail sentence if waste is illegally dumped and harms the environment.
- Up to **\$1,000,000** for transporting waste (or causing waste to be transported) to a place that cannot lawfully receive waste.
- Up to **\$250,000** for supplying false or misleading information about waste.

**Lawful handling** of PERC solvent and wastes means they are dealt with according to occupational health and safety guidelines. The company supplying chemicals can provide a material safety data sheet outlining these.

**Lawful disposal** means any PERC waste is removed by an approved waste transporter and taken to an EPA-licensed receiving facility.

For licensed transporters and receiving facilities, search the public register website: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/prpoeoapp/searchregister.aspx](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/prpoeoapp/searchregister.aspx)

DECC's website provides more information about legal obligations and bunded storage areas. See [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/mao/bundingspill.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/mao/bundingspill.htm)

## Unsure what to do?

For any questions about how to manage PERC or for assistance in dealing responsibly with dry cleaning waste, several organisations can help:

- The local council
- Department of the Environment and Climate Change  
Environment Line: 131 555  
email: [hazardouswaste@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:hazardouswaste@environment.nsw.gov.au)  
website: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)
- Waste-tracking fact sheets  
website: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/OWT/wastetrackfs.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/OWT/wastetrackfs.htm)
- Dry Cleaning Institute of Australia (NSW)  
phone: 1300 134 511  
email: [drycleaninginstitute@bigpond.com](mailto:drycleaninginstitute@bigpond.com)  
website: [www.drycleanersweb.com.au](http://www.drycleanersweb.com.au)

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website: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)

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# Managing dry cleaning waste

for a safer environment



## Why dry cleaners must take care when handling chemicals and waste

One chemical dry cleaners often use as a solvent is perchloroethylene or PERC.

But not all dry cleaners dispose of it safely.

In NSW, under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*, PERC needs to be properly managed so it does not harm people or the environment. This particularly applies to the solvent and waste generated by the dry-cleaning industry.



PERC is listed as a suspected cancer-causing agent by the World Health Organisation's website.

PERC and its wastes are also toxic to land and water ecosystems. When substances containing

PERC are not properly stored, handled and disposed of, they can harm our environment.

### It is an offence to:

- dispose of dry cleaning waste in the general garbage collection
- pour dry cleaning waste down a sink or toilet
- pour dry cleaning waste into a stormwater drain
- dispose of dry cleaning waste to an unlicensed facility.

The Department of Environment and Climate Change investigates businesses that cannot account for their waste and can fine or prosecute businesses that do not comply with the law.

## What can dry cleaners do to cut their PERC air emissions and reduce PERC usage?

- ✓ maintain dry cleaning machines in proper working order at all times
- ✓ check machines regularly for leaks
- ✓ monitor and record the quantity of PERC used against the waste being generated
- ✓ install new machines that use less PERC and have good PERC recycling capacity
- ✓ if unsure, contact the machine supplier for more information.



### Did you know there are environmentally friendly dry cleaning chemicals available?

Ask your chemical supplier and check the material and safety data sheet (MSDS) to ensure these chemicals can be managed appropriately.

## How should PERC solvent and waste be stored?

Containers used to store chemicals and their waste products should be:

- ✓ kept separate from other chemicals
- ✓ kept away from drains and sewers
- ✓ kept somewhere they will not be knocked over
- ✓ kept away from heat-producing sources
- ✓ tightly sealed



Chest for safe chemical storage



Sealable waste storage drum

- ✓ chemically resistant
- ✓ clearly labelled
- ✓ stored under cover.



Small tray for storing and bunding solvent and waste

Chemicals and waste should be stored in a contained spill tray (chemically resistant polyurethane or stainless steel) or in a bunded area so that if there is a leak or a spill, the waste and chemicals are contained. The storage or bunding capacity must be large enough to hold the full volume of chemicals or waste liquids being stored.

## How can dry cleaners be prepared for spills?

- ✓ ensure all staff handling PERC have completed the PERC licence course offered through the Dry Cleaning Institute of Australia or TAFE
- ✓ clearly display a copy of the MSDS for PERC



Spill kit

- ✓ follow occupational health and safety clean-up plans for leaks and spills
- ✓ keep a maintained spill kit or kits on the site near the machines and the chemical and waste storage areas



Small spill trays

- ✓ train all staff to use the spill kits and show them where they are stored.

## Dry cleaners be aware

The movement of PERC solvents and waste is being monitored throughout NSW by the Department of Environment and Climate Change.