



GREEN STAMP

Bringing cleaner production to the Western Australian automotive industry.

DEGREASERS AND DETERGENTS

Engine degreasing and vehicle washing are an integral part of the automotive service and repair industry. The chemical properties of many of these cleaning agents can however decrease the efficiency of oil separation systems, and may allow oil-contaminated wastewater to be discharged into sewerage and septic systems. Degreasers and detergents that are biodegradable and possess 'quick break' properties are a simple and effective way of improving the operational efficiency of your oil separators, and minimising the risk of environmental harm.

What are 'quick break' products?

Cleaning agents with NON quick break properties often cause the oil that is removed when degreasing and washing to remain emulsified and bound up within the washdown water even after extended periods of settling. Quick break cleaning products rapidly separate (or 'break') the oil removed during washdown or degreasing from the water within which it is emulsified. For those businesses using interceptor traps, the benefit of this is that the released 'free' oil can then float on top of the collection pit water and is readily available for collection by waste contractors. For those businesses with above-ground separators, rapidly 'breaking' the oil component from the washwater will ensure that oily effluent cannot pass directly through the oil separator and enter sewerage and septic systems.

Why Biodegradable?

Biodegradation is nature's way of recycling wastes, or breaking down organic matter into nutrients that can be used by other organisms. The chemicals contained within degreasers and detergents remain diluted in the washdown water, and will ultimately pass through to sewer or septic with the treated effluent from your oil separation system. It is therefore important that all cleaning agents possess properties which allow them biodegrade quickly – thereby ensuring they will have minimal impact when they are discharged into receiving environments.

Additional Information

- Information about the biodegradability and 'quick-break' properties of your cleaning chemicals may be available on the product's label or Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). Alternatively, your supplier may be able to provide you with written confirmation of the product's chemical properties.
- Where possible, avoid using solvent-based degreasers, and chose cleaning agents that are aqueous-based, non-toxic and non-hazardous to the environment.



Motor Trade Association of
Western Australia (Inc)

The Green Stamp program is a cleaner production initiative of the Motor Trade Association of Western Australia and the Department of Environment with funding support from the State Government's Waste Management and Recycling Fund..





GREEN STAMP ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDELINE for Degreasers and Detergents

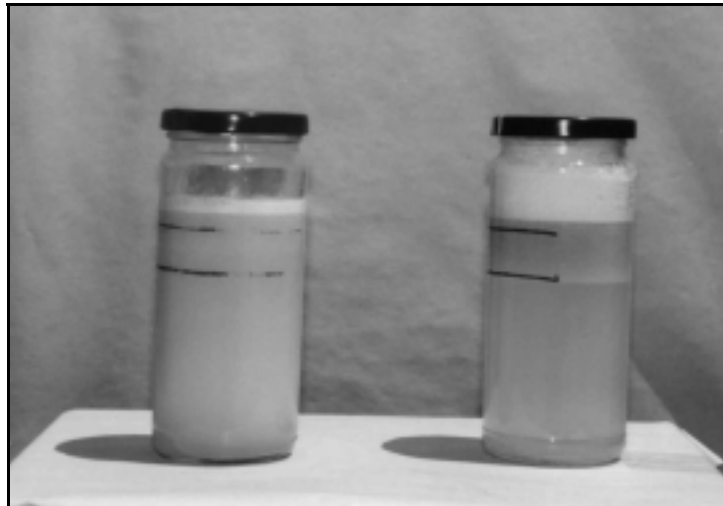
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Testing your chemicals for quick-break properties

1. Half fill a jar with clean water and mark the top of the waterline using a permanent marking pen.
2. Draw another line 1- 2 cm above the waterline mark, and fill to this line with used oil.
3. Add approx. 1 teaspoon of diluted cleaning agent (or 1/2 teaspoon of concentrate) to the jar, put on the lid and shake vigorously to emulsify the liquids.
4. Set jar aside, and allow 10 minutes for the oily water emulsion to settle out.



Test Results

- ✓ If after 10 minutes, the oily water emulsion has separated back into its respective lines of clear water and 'free' oil (jar on right), your cleaning chemical possesses quick-break properties.
- ✗ If however after 10 minutes, the liquids remain emulsified and have a white, cloudy appearance (jar on left), then the cleaning agent you are using does not possess quick-break properties. NB. Many standard solvent-based degreasers will display similar attributes to the jar on the left.

For further information contact MTA-WA on (08) 9345 3466.

The Green Stamp's Environmental Guidelines have been developed to assist Western Australian automotive businesses to better manage their environmental impacts. However, it remains the responsibility of individual businesses to determine the extent to which various laws apply to them and to take appropriate steps to achieve compliance. Though every possible effort has been made, the MTA-WA and the Department of Environment accept no responsibility for the accuracy of information or environmental integrity of any businesses or contractors herein.