



Have you been Envirochecked?



SOPHIE LUTTRELL

ENVIRONMENT

BEING able to identify environmental risks in a place that you spend a lot of time in can be difficult; once we get used to our surroundings we tend to not notice the little things that are happening.

This is where having a fresh set of eyes coming in to do an Envirocheck can help. The MTA provides this service to its members as part of the Green Stamp Plus program.

It is a simple and quick way of identifying where your business is performing well or where improvements could be made in regards to environmental best practice guidelines and legislative requirements.

Having an Envirocheck completed on your business can help protect against environmental fines and prosecution as ideas are offered about how to improve environmental performance, save money and create a safer and cleaner environment for both staff and customers.

An Envirocheck is a simple checklist covering:

- Environmental management (plans, policies and training)
- Energy use
- Containment and storage practices
- Wastewater management
- Spill management
- Air quality
- Waste disposal management.

Envirochecks identify the best practice guidelines as suggested by the relevant governing bodies such as the Department of Environment and Climate Change (incorporating the Environmental Protection Authority), Sydney Water, Hunter Water and local councils.

The Envirochecks focus on ensuring that members are aware of the main principle behind best practice guidelines; that businesses are responsible by law to act in due diligence where the environment is concerned. The key legislation is the Protection of the Environment Operations (POEO) Act 1997. Due diligence requires businesses to:

- Prevent pollution by taking reasonable measures
- Ensure that all preventative actions and equipment are in place, recurrently checked and well maintained
- Take action to prevent or minimise potential environmental impacts
- Show that all reasonable steps have been taken to prevent an incident that has caused pollution, should it occur.

From these legislative requirements, the MTA can identify steps in your business that can be taken to ensure compliance.

For example, an Envirocheck will check if an oil water separation system is regularly serviced. It is not law that the system is regularly serviced, but if the separator was to ever malfunction and cause pollution, the Department of Environment and Climate Change could investigate. In finding that the separator was not responsibly maintained, prosecution could occur as the business has failed to take reasonable steps to prevent pollution from occurring.

In 2007 more than 40 MTA NSW and MTA ACT members participated in completing Envirochecks.

These businesses participated voluntarily and have demonstrated a motivation to be aware of potential environmental impacts for their business.

By participating in an Envirocheck, you can gain invaluable information on your businesses' environmental compliance with legislative requirements.

Envirochecks are completed by representatives of MTA NSW and the results are completely confidential. It is a member service and is completely free.

Each participating business receives a confidential report detailing any required improvements, best practice suggestions and acknowledging the businesses' positive environmental attributes.

Having your business Envirochecked is an easy way of seeing how your business is performing environmentally, call MTA on 02 9213 4222 to make an appointment.

The MTA is running the Green Stamp Plus program in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory as a joint initiative with the Australian Government Department of Water and Energy Resources. For more information please visit www.greenstamp.mtansw.com.au or call MTA on 02 9213 4222.



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