

Machine Shop Checklist #4: Metal Chips



Metalworking fluid that drains off metal chips in an uncontrolled fashion can cause soil and groundwater contamination. Over time, even small leaks will harm the environment. Compliance inspectors look for dead foliage, discolored pavement, and evidence of improper disposal in sinks, toilets, showers, and storm drains. You should, too—to proactively prevent contamination. It's less expensive to manage metal chips and drainage properly.

Manage your metal chips

- Separate metalworking fluid from chips by shutting off chip conveyors to allow drainage to sumps or drums. Consider using centrifuges or briquette makers to accelerate drainage.
- Store chips inside on an impervious surface that has no nearby floor drains.
- If stored outside, do so under a roof or closeable container top.
- Store chips in transport containers that are sloped to allow residual metalworking fluids to drain to a low spot. Collect the fluid via a drainage port prior to shipping off site.
- Park containers on an uncracked paved surface that is easy to clean if a spill occurs.
- Maintain a spill kit. Keep handy a shop vac, floor absorbent, shop towels, shovel, broom, and if necessary, a portable boom. Include whatever your shop needs to prevent discharge to the environment.
- Inspect and isolate dry wells, septic systems, and storm drains.
- Keep the invoices that show metal chips are being recycled.

Manage your chip drainage

- Metalworking chip drainage must be collected and disposed of properly (as well as the rest of your spent fluids).

Contact Information

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