

Miwa needs your help to fight pollution

Customers are putting pressure on mechanic workshops to be more eco-friendly, which is in keeping with increased inspection of green credentials in the automotive sector. Environmental responsibility is becoming an industry standard.



One litre of oil can pollute a million litres of water. Source: Tim Moosholder/Unsplash

“We keep looking for new and better ways to minimise the environmental impact that a car service has. For example, Did you know that one litre of used engine oil could pollute a million litres of water? The same holds true of other car fluids, such as coolant, brake oil, transmission oil, etcetera,” says Dewald Ranft, Chairman of the Motor Industry Workshop Association (Miwa).

Ranft acknowledges that as an industry, environmental considerations are potentially one of the biggest challenges facing the automotive ecosystem of suppliers and manufacturers.



Dewald Ranft, Miwa chairperson. Source: Supplied

“We appreciate that our customers are equally looking to support workshops that are as ecofriendly as possible and a great deal of focus and attention is being placed on this important area.”

Miwa encourages consumers to only support compliant and accredited workshops that are making this necessary investment to ensure that waste generated during a typical car service is either recycled or disposed of responsibly.

Next time you need to take your car in for a service, consider the impact the workshop you choose to repair your car leaves on the environment.

Here are three key questions worth asking:

How do you dispose of your old oil, oil rags, oil filters, oil containers?

This may seem like an odd question if there are environmental laws in place, but the reality is that with the large number of informal and unaccredited workshops, these practices are difficult to enforce.

Any accredited workshop will however have these collected by a reputable waste management company. They will be recycled and disposed of in the correct manner.

Conversely, some workshops just add these items to their normal waste and pour the oil into our sewer system, thereby contaminating our ground water or even worse, finding its way back into our seas. It is worth supporting only those workshops that dispose of their waste in the most environmentally ethical way possible, using accredited contractors.

Where does the spillage go?

When the workshop washes its floors or even their hands, does that dirty water go back into the sewer or wastewater system? Do they have oil traps/separators connected to their drains?

We know in a workshop that spills happen and products like oil and degreaser can soak through concrete and into the environment. Using a barrier, like an industrial acrylic floor system, can stop the leakage and make it easier to clean up fluid spills.



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Catherine Schenck 14 Jul 2023



It is also worth checking if they have spill kits for their oil spills in the workshop and whether these spill kits are environmentally friendly.

A reputable workshop will also invest in environmentally preferred stock like non-toxic degreasers which shows it is serious about its environmental impact.

Ever thought what happens to the water your workshop uses to clean your car?

Ask if the water is recycled and re-used or is it allowed to just drain away. One option will be to insist that the workshop makes use of the new waterless wash systems that are available, thereby creating less water wastage.

These are just a few items to be aware of when choosing your workshop.

“We are conscious of the impact a car workshop can have on the environment and that’s why it is becoming critically important for workshops to follow environmentally friendly practices to close the loop of waste and for consumers to be more circumspect in the workshops they select,” concludes Ranft.

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