



Northern Ireland Ambulance Service
Health and Social Care Trust



SPILLS PROCEDURE

**THE SAFE MANAGEMENT AND PREVENTION OF SPILLS AT ALL
AMBULANCE PROPERTIES**

Jan 2014

Version 1.1

NORTHERN IRELAND AMBULANCE SERVICE

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Published: 2014
Review: Jan 2016

1. Introduction

The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service operates from 62 properties of which 58 are Ambulance Stations and deployment points throughout Northern Ireland. These Stations are not accessed by the general public but are used by our staff and vehicles 24 hour a day, 365 days a year. The Broadway Ambulance Station includes a vehicle maintenance workshop.

Falls, slips and trips combined made up more than half of all reported major injuries and almost one third of over-3-day injuries to employees. (HSE statistics 2011/12). Slips and trips were the most common cause of major injuries to employees (RIDROR). Vehicles, equipment and machinery have the potential to leak fluids and substances which can contribute to slips and falls. This procedure seeks to inform staff about safe management of vehicle related fluids and spills in particular. However any spill in any work area must be considered as a hazard and cleaned up appropriately.

This procedure must be read in conjunction with the current Health and Safety at work legislation and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH).

2. Purpose of the procedure

This procedure is to identify potential risks associated with spillages and feasible preventative measures that can be taken to avoid or minimise them. It will also clarify the reporting and management of spillages.

Scope of the procedure

This procedure and actions outlined relate to all NIAS Ambulance Stations, deployment points and all work areas. It also specifically relates to the maintenance workshop due to the increased risk of fluid leakage and spillages in this environment.

All staff entering NIAS properties and using NIAS vehicles have a responsibility to report any spillages or leakages to their manager, to minimise the risk to other persons and the environment.

Potential causes of spills

Due to the amount and range of equipment used in NIAS the potential for spills is greater than that of a standard fleet. The areas with the greatest potential risk of spillage are:-

- Servicing of vehicles and equipment
- Engine and transmission systems
- Coolant systems
- Fuel and saloon heater systems
- Tail lift hydraulic systems
- PAG oil from air conditioning systems
- Ad blue systems

In the vehicle maintenance workshop the potential for leakages and spillages when completing repairs, commonly involves :

- Lubricants
- Anti-Freeze
- Hydraulic Oils
- Vehicle Fluids

3. Prevention

Whilst small leaks or spills may not be immediately obvious it is essential that staff quickly identify any developing leaks and help prevent spillages by:-

- Using a designated area for servicing, maintaining and topping up vehicles and equipment.
- Ensuring that when topping up fluid levels such as engine oil any spillages are cleaned off the engine and surrounding area. Using a funnel will minimise the potential for spillage.
- Investigating causes of spotting or staining on vehicle parking area. This may be the early warning signs of a leak developing.
- Ensuring the work area is clear and free from any spillages. The supervisor or manager must monitor the areas to ensure compliance by physical inspection, at least daily, or more often if required by the risk assessment.
- Storing all oils and fluids in the correct containers, and in an appropriate storage area (COSHH).

Ambulance staff

When completing the VDI (Vehicle Daily Inspection) attention should be given to any smells or fluids present in or under the vehicle. If any fluids are found, a defect report should be completed and passed to the station supervisor. The vehicle should be booked into the workshop for further inspection.

Workshop Staff

The workshop supervisor should ensure regular inspections of the work area are carried out in accordance with the risk assessment. They must ensure that spill prevention systems are being complied with and any unavoidable spills are identified and cleaned up promptly.

Contractor responsibilities

Contractors must take due care when delivering any fluids and lubricants to NIAS premises. They must supply fluids and lubricants in suitable containers, handle them correctly, take care not to overfill NIAS tanks and clean up spills as necessary.

4. Storage and disposal of fluids

All fluids must be stored as per supplier's recommendations. Within the workshop environment there are specific requirements to meet legislation. When storing quantities of fluids in excess of 200 litres bunded tanks or other suitable storage methods must be used. In addition there are environmental constraints when disposing of used, contaminated or spilled fluids. The table below highlights the requirements

Type of Fluid	Storage New	Storage Waste	Disposal Route
Engine Oil	>200 Litre, bunded oil tank	>200 Litre, bunded oil tank	Removed by licensed contractor
Engine Oil	5 Litre containers	>200 Litre bunded oil tank	Removed by licensed contractor
Dextron Transmission Oil	1litre Containers	>200 Litre bunded oil tank	Removed by licensed contractor
EP80 Transmission Oil	1litre Containers	>200 Litre bunded oil tank	Removed by licensed contractor
75/80 Transmission Oil	1litre Containers	>200 Litre bunded oil tank	Removed by licensed contractor
Anti-Freeze	20 litre Containers	50 litre containers supplied by licensed contractor	Removed by licensed contractor
Brake Fluid	1litre Containers	50 litre containers supplied by licensed contractor	Removed by licensed contractor
Screen Wash	5 litre containers	Not applicable	Not applicable
Hydraulic Oil	1litre Containers	>200 Litre, bunded oil tank	Removed by licensed contractor
Petrol Fuel	Max of 5 litres only to be stored	Contaminated fuels will be removed by licensed contractor and not stored	Removed by licensed contractor
Diesel Fuel	Max of 5 litres only to be stored	Contaminated fuels will be removed by licensed contractor and not stored	Removed by licensed contractor
Ad Blue	20 litre Containers	Not applicable	Not applicable

N.B. COSHH risk assessment must be carried out to cover the storage, use, disposal and Health and Safety advice relevant to any hazardous fluid. These should be available in the work place and reviewed regularly.

5. Spills Procedure

In the event of a leak or spillage at any location, the following actions must be taken as soon as safe to do so.

1. Assess the Risk

- a) Identify the fluid and its potential to cause harm
- b) Consult the COSHH Register for the fluid spilled. Consider how it may cause harm and follow the immediate first aid advice as necessary.

Other Risks

- Consider other risks eg is the fluid flammable?
- Size and location of spill.
- Seek further advice as necessary.

2. Contain the Spill

Contain the spillage by deploying a spill kit. Kits are available at Stations, maintenance workshop area and in both maintenance vans. Prevent run off into the drains where possible.

3. Clearing up after spillage

- Clean up the spillage.
- Obtain specialist advice as required.
- Engage specialist contractor if necessary.
- Dispose of through approved channels

This procedure will be reviewed by the Fleet Manager bi-annually or earlier if changes to legislation, work practices or a significant incident requires it.

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ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

BS/ER

17 January 2014