

Line marking of sports fields

Most schools perform line marking in grassed areas to define playing areas and sporting fields.

Line marking products have improved over time and it is now recognised that:

- the use of oil waste and other solvents for line marking purposes is not appropriate
- it is an offence under environmental legislation to use products that could contaminate waterways and soil
- new safer, water-based line marking products that include turf growth retardants all but eliminate the need to use herbicides for line marking.



Preferred materials for line marking of school fields are purpose made products that are non-toxic, non-alkaline and non-hazardous. Some products are **not to be used** as they pose unacceptable health or environment risks.

Acceptable line marking practice – select non toxic, non-hazardous and eco-friendly products	Unacceptable line marking practice – not to be used.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ water-based liquid paint line marking products from sporting retailers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ includes water based paints that include turf growth retardants ✓ water-based powdered paint products ✓ organic based water soluble paints ✓ water-based vegetable dyes (although these may stain clothes) ✓ liquid or powdered chalk products ✓ aerosol line marking paint sprays (however, non-aerosol products are preferred) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ sump oil ✗ creosote ✗ diesel ✗ kerosene ✗ solvent based paints ✗ other flammable products ✗ hydrated lime ✗ powdered coloured oxides (eye irritant) ✗ herbicides identified as hazardous according to the safety data sheet or that can cause damage to the playing surface.

What can you do?

- Review the product's **safety data sheet before purchasing** or using any product for line marking as this helps to ensure products are non-toxic, non-alkaline, non-hazardous and eco-friendly. Reviewing the SDS also helps to ensure:
 - [prohibited substances](#) are not being used
 - products do not cause adverse health effects
 - eco-friendly alternatives are considered - low impact on soil, water, plants animals
- Review your school's processes for line marking:
 - community expectations are acknowledged regarding the safe use of chemicals in schools
 - products do not cause long term or permanent damage e.g. cause ruts/divots in playing fields.



- Get some advice from sporting bodies or product suppliers:
 - companies specialising in line marking products and equipment can often assist with appropriate and durable alternatives dependent on field type and conditions.
- Use the right equipment for the job.
 - There are equipment and paints specifically designed for marking and spraying activities. The use of the correct product applicator helps to prevent chemical spills and poisoning, reduce manual task injuries and provide a safer and well-finished job.
- Waste minimisation
 - Identify the waste disposal method before you buy – ask your supplier or read the SDS.
 - Mix only what is required for the job
- Waste disposal
 - Recycle unused paints where possible via “paint back schemes”. Water based paints and small quantities of solvent based paints may be may be decanted into a plastic container filled with kitty litter. Allow the paint/litter mix to dry out then place in the bin. Allow the paint bucket/can to dry out, then recycle the can/bucket and lid separately where possible. DO NOT discharge paints into sewers or waterways.
 - Thinners, turpentine, kerosene and solvents are all considered hazardous waste. Waste solvents are to be disposed of via a licenced waste contractor.
 - Waste oils including sump oil may be [recycled](#) via collection services.
 - Herbicides are to be disposed of according to SDS requirements. Where you cannot use the herbicide for the intended purpose, disposed of via an agstewardship program or check if your local council hazardous waste depot will accept it.
 - Aerosol cans will contain some amount of product residue and propellant even when they appear to be completely empty. All aerosol cans should be regarded as as hazardous and disposed of responsibly. When empty they should be modified so as to be no longer hazardous (i.e. sprayed until emptied, lid and valve removed - do not puncture or incinerate aerosol cans). Refer to the manufacturer’s website or supplier safety information for specific disposal processes. Safely emptied cans may be recycled if they bear the Australasian Recycling Label.

Resources

- [Chemical management procedure](#)
- Legislation: [Environmental Protection Act 1994](#), s440ZG; [Environmental Regulation 2019](#), (s42, s43; schedule 9)
- [Used Oil Recycling](#)