Best Management Practices, (BMP) for Auto Body Shops:

Pollution prevention means reducing waste and reducing the use of pollutants in your shop. Pollution prevention is usually the easiest and cheapest way to protect the environment and maintain a safe, healthy environment for you, your workers, and your neighbors. You can prevent pollution by reducing your use of dangerous materials, handling these materials carefully, and conserving water and energy. Since pollution can waste money and resources, preventing pollution can help you:

• Reduce operating costs of your business;
• Reduce waste disposal costs;
• Reduce long-term liability for environmental problems;
• Protect the environment;
• Improve workplace safety and health; and
• Project a positive public image to your customers and neighbors.

The following list describes ten very important things you can do to prevent pollution in your auto Body/Repair shop. If you follow these ten tips, you will be well on your way to having a clean, safe, and efficient auto body shop.

1. Choose less toxic and polluting products. Your materials supplier can help you find better materials to use in your shop. Ask your supplier to help you:

   • **Eliminate methylene chloride paint strippers.** Methylene chloride is a regulated hazardous waste that can cause cancer and worsen heart problems. The best way to avoid the risks and costs of dealing with methylene chloride is not to use it. Instead, you can remove paint from cars with a ventilated sander. If you have to use a chemical paint stripper, make sure it doesn’t contain methylene chloride.

   • **Use low volatile organic compound (VOC) paints.** VOCs are chemicals that evaporate readily into the air from materials like paints and solvents. VOCs contribute to ground level ozone, which is a public health concern (for example, ground level ozone can worsen asthma attacks). Furthermore VOC’s are regulated compounds, and are of a great concern to the St. George Regional Water Reclamation Facility, (SGRWRF).

   • **Use water-based/low VOC cleaners and solvents.**

   • **Consider using waterborne primer and basecoat.** This technology is becoming more common in auto body shops as a way of replacing solvent-based paint systems. Though additional equipment, like heat lamps, is needed, waterborne coating technology can reduce pollution and make workplaces healthier.

   • **Make sure your yellow, orange, and red tints do not contain lead or lead chromates.** Lead is toxic and should be avoided wherever possible.
2. **Manage and store materials carefully.** Keep your shop organized and follow good housekeeping tips. Only order the amount of materials you need to make sure your materials do not expire or become obsolete. It is a good idea to have just one person responsible for ordering materials and keeping track of inventories. Be sure you follow the requirements for hazardous and universal wastes if applicable to your operation. Hazardous materials cannot be put in the regular trash, it is your responsibility to identify these wastes and handle them properly.

3. **Reduce your use of solvents.** Use an enclosed spray gun cleaner that recirculates solvent. This type of system reduces solvent fumes, the amount of solvent you need for cleaning spray guns, and the amount of solvent waste you generate. Also, do not use solvents to clean hands or skin. Solvents can soak through your skin and make you sick. Instead, use a commercial soap solution made for paint cleanup purposes. Finally, reduce your use of solvents for cleaning up in your paint spray booth by using disposable masking over interior paint booth surfaces. Disposable masking materials include plastic and paper sheeting or peel/tacky coats. (But remember that disposable masking can be hazardous waste if your paint is hazardous.

4. **Minimize exposures to auto body dust.** Sanding dust contains toxic metals such as lead and chromium of which are Local Limit parameters and are regulated by the SGRWRF. Most shops use disc sanders to remove paint/body filler compound from cars and these sanders create dust that can be dangerous and create high metal concentrations if present in your wastewater. The best way to minimize exposure to dust is to use a ventilated sander and to do sanding work in an enclosed space with a ventilation system. If at all possible eliminate any and all wash down procedures within sanding area. The residual paint and body filler should be disposed of through a dry removal process such as a vacuum, and/or broom.

5. **Use High Volume Low Pressure (HVLP) spray guns.** You should use High Volume/Low Pressure (HVLP) spraying equipment in order to making your painting more efficient. HVLP spray guns can achieve a paint transfer efficiency of at least 65%, which means you will use less paint and have less waste.

6. **Know where your wastewater goes.** There is only one place where you are allowed to send wastewater from your shop operations: the public sewer. You are required to make sure that your facility is meeting the pretreatment requirements. If you are connected to the sanitary sewer you may be required to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs). If you have questions pertaining to these requirements please contact the St. George City Pretreatment Office at (435)-627-4266. Also, if you have a floor drain in your shop, it will have to be closed/sealed, unless you meet certain requirements. The requirements for wastewater and floor drains can be found in the St. George City Ordinance (Title 8 Chapter 4).

7. **Train your workers.** Make sure your workers are trained in how to minimize overspray when painting. This will save paint and money and prevent air pollution. Each year, train employees to safely and properly handle hazardous waste. For example, workers should understand how to prevent spills by not overfilling containers and by using funnels with lids that are kept closed when not in use. Workers should also know what to do in case of a spill.

8. **Manage shop towels according to the law.** You should reduce the amount of paints and solvents on your shop towels as much as possible. Shop towels dripping with paints or solvents must be handled as hazardous waste. Towels that are only slightly dirty with paint or solvents can either be sent off-site for laundering at a properly licensed commercial laundry facility or disposed of as hazardous waste.
9. **Consider using paintless dent removal (PDR).** In certain applications, PDR can replace conventional refinishing, thereby reducing waste and pollution. As you may be aware, PDR is a purely mechanical process that uses special tools to restore sheet metal back to its original form by removing small dents, creases, and surface imperfections without the need for repainting. If PDR sounds right for you, call your local distributor for more information.

10. **Conserve water.** Conserving water will save you money and help protect the environment. Limit, or eliminate, (through dry clean-up practice procedures) your use of wash water wherever possible.

Please consider implementing the following good ideas to prevent pollution from your auto body shop to the sanitary sewer system of St. George City, Utah.

**MORE GOOD IDEAS**

1. Pre-clean parts with mechanical techniques (like a squeegee, a rag or a wire brush) to reduce the use of solvents.
2. Use a solvent recycler to recycle thinners, gun cleaners, or other solvents.
3. Keep spill-absorbent material available for cleaning spills.
4. Store partially used absorbents in closed, labeled containers, right next to the container for new absorbents. Reuse partially used absorbents instead of throwing them away.
5. Keep liquids covered and in cool places to reduce evaporation. For example, covering a parts washer can reduce evaporation and make your solvent last longer.
6. Take steps to avoid drips and spills of used oil. Always use drain pans. Keep a well-organized shop to avoid accidents and spills.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR REPORTING RELEASES**

You must report all releases of petroleum products, paints, paint thinners, and chemicals to the sanitary sewer system. This means you: Call the St. George Regional Water Reclamation Facility, (SGRWRF) at 435-627-4266 to report the substance and approximate quantity spilled.

While the related health concerns mentioned are concerning and applicable to the Auto-Body sector of our economy. They do not convey, and should not be interpreted as conveying any approval, endorsement, or recommendation by St. George City. Please reference [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov), and/or [www.deq.utah.gov](http://www.deq.utah.gov) for questions you may have pertaining to hazardous or non-hazardous chemicals, and compounds.