

## How to choose absorbents...

### Not all spills and leaks warrant the use of your spill kit.

Spill kits should only be used for spill response. A small spill of a few litres may be more of a maintenance issue. Yet these smaller spills collectively can still impact the environment by polluting soils, groundwater and stormwater drains. Therefore part of your action plan to manage spills should be to select appropriate maintenance absorbents.

These absorbents consist mainly of pads, rolls and pillows together with a ground floor absorbent, for example, bioactive organic particulate, paper kitty litter, clay kitty litter etc.

### Choosing a maintenance absorbent

The following questions and answers will help you make a selection:

- **Could the spill be in or around water?**  
If you need to absorb hydrocarbons (oils and fuels) only and not water, then you must select an oil & fuel absorbent. Most hydrocarbons will float on the water and are easily absorbed using oil & fuel absorbents which are white in colour.
- **What type of liquid will be spilled?**  
If you're likely to spill hydrocarbons, then use white oil & fuel absorbents. If you're handling aggressive acids or bases, then use pink coloured chemical absorbents. If you're likely to spill a mixture of liquids such as degreaser, water-based chemicals, coolants or small amounts of oils & fuels, then the grey general purpose absorbents are most suitable.
- **Could the spill be on unsealed surfaces?**  
Spills that have soaked into soils are more difficult to absorb than if they were on a sealed surface. If free liquid exists, use a pad or pillow to absorb the puddles. To address the remaining spill in the soil, you may need to utilise a bioactive ground absorbent such as Global Peat. You may find it necessary to use more than one tool to complete the task. For example, you may need to use a different absorbent for outdoor unsealed surfaces to one for indoor use.



### Different varieties of absorbent materials

Absorbents can be made of synthetic polypropylene or organic cotton.

#### Why would I choose polypropylene absorbents?

Polypropylene offers you a great absorbency capacity relative to cost. It is lightweight and clean to handle. It holds together well and has virtually no problems with shelf life. Dispose of through high temperature incineration or appropriate landfill.

#### Why would I choose organic absorbents?

Sustainable cotton-based absorbents feature an extremely high absorbency rate. They are also very light and clean to use and can be land-farmed. Cotton-based absorbents are not as compact to transport as polypropylene however, and are slightly more expensive.

### Different choices for absorbents

- Absorbent pads - pre-cut for easy use. Ideal for cleaning up smaller spills or for final clean.
- Absorbent rolls - available in various lengths, 40m or 50m are most common. Cut to place on workbenches, on shelves or under machinery. Roll holders are also available to make dispensing easier.
- Absorbent mats - are ideal for use under large vehicles to catch leaks and drips.
- Pads on a roll - supplied in a dispensing carton and contains 15m of pads, 38cm wide, perforated every 37cm.
- Pillows - use to absorb larger puddles, block drains and catch drips.
- Bioactive ground absorbents - for hydrocarbon spills on both sealed and unsealed surfaces.
- General purpose ground absorbents - for absorbing all liquid types except aggressive chemicals.
- Chemical floorsweeps - range from inert particulate to super-absorbent polymers.



**Use the table below to select the correct absorbent for different areas**

Ideal for:	Product name	Code/prefix	Absorbs	Okay to landfarm?	Okay to incinerate?
Inside warehouses Oil and fuel (hydrocarbons)	Polypropylene pads - HD	MBP	Oil & fuel only	No	Yes
	Polypropylene pads - SD	MBBP		No	
	Polypropylene rolls - HD	MBR		No	
	Polypropylene rolls - SD	MBBR		No	
	Polypropylene mats - HD	MBM		No	
	Polypropylene mats - SD	MBBM		No	
	Polypropylene pillows - large	PPFO		No	
	Polypropylene pillows - small	EP		No	
	Organic cotton pads	HSP		Yes	
	Organic cotton rolls	HSR.9		Yes	
	Organic cotton pillows - large	OPFO		Yes	
	Organic cotton pillows - small	OP		Yes	
Inside warehouses Aggressive chemicals	Polypropylene pads	CP / CPP	All liquids, including harsh and aggressive chemicals	No	If safe to do so
	Polypropylene mats	UM			
	Polypropylene rolls	CR40.9			
	Polypropylene pillows - large	PPC			
	Polypropylene pillows - medium	UP			
	Polypropylene pillows - small	UP10L			
Inside warehouses Non-aggressive chemicals	Polypropylene pads	MGP	All liquids, except harsh and aggressive chemicals	No	If safe to do so
	Polypropylene rolls	MGR			
	Polypropylene pillows - large	MSPFO			
	Polypropylene pillows - small	MSP			

**Use the table below to select the correct ground and floor absorbent for different areas**

Ideal for:	Product name	Code/prefix	Absorbs	Okay to landfarm?	Okay to incinerate?
Inside warehouses	Floorsorb	FS3/FS7	All liquids, except harsh and aggressive chemicals	Yes	If safe to do so
	Budgetsorb	BSB20L/BSB50L		Yes	If safe to do so
	Sorbalite zeolite	ZEO22		No	No
	Ultrasorb	US10		Yes	If safe to do so
Unsealed areas, roads, hardstands, wet areas	Global Peat	PMPB8/PMPB/ PMPB11/PMPB18.5	Oil and fuel only	Yes	Yes
Sealed areas, roads, hardstands	Prosorb Sorbalite zeolite	PROS10/PROS20 ZEO22	All liquids, except harsh and aggressive chemicals	No	No
Wet areas	Oil and fuel absorbent particulate	PTH1.5/PTH2.5	Oil and fuel only	No	If safe to do so
Aggressive chemicals	Hazchem absorbent particulate Desap super absorbent polymer Multisorb vermiculite Acid neutraliser Alkali neutraliser	PTC2.5 DESAP V30 GN GNAL	All liquids, including harsh and aggressive chemicals	No	