



Pollution Prevention & Compliance:

**How We Can Help Your Business
Reduce Its Environmental Impact**

METRO  **ROD**

Welcome From Christopher

At Metro Rod, we understand the growing pressures faced by the automotive industry to meet environmental regulations while safeguarding operations and reputation. A proactive approach to pollution prevention is no longer optional - it's essential.

Pollution Prevention and Compliance: How We Can Help Your Business Reduce Its Environmental Impact, has been developed to provide clear, actionable recommendations on building and implementing an effective plan. From assessing risks to putting preventative measures in place, we aim to help businesses reduce their environmental impact, ensure compliance, and protect their bottom line.

As part of our commitment to supporting businesses across the sector, we've drawn on our extensive experience in pollution prevention and environmental compliance to create this resource. We hope it will help you build a safer, more sustainable future for your operations and the environment.

Christopher Nelson
Senior Technical Support Manager



Scan the QR code to contact us for more information.



Introduction to Our Report

Since pollution protection guidelines were withdrawn in 2015, all businesses in England are now required to comply with the Environment Agency's standard 'Pollution Prevention for Businesses'.

This 'standard' is promoted as best practice for organisations of all sizes and sectors. It offers information to industries on how to manage processes that may affect the environment.

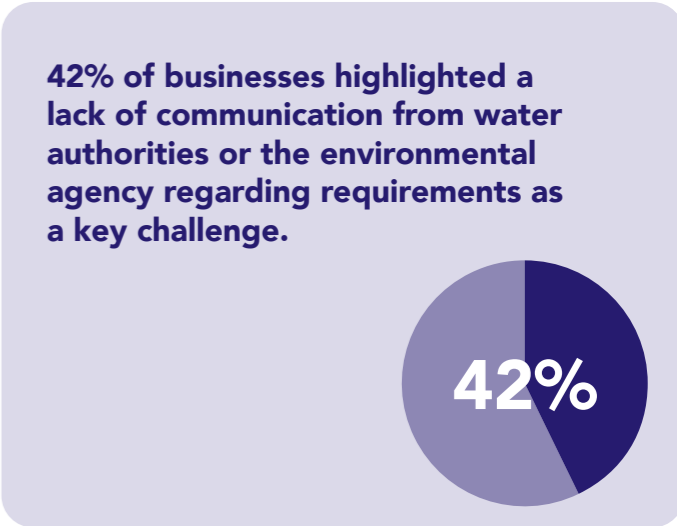
In the automotive industry, regulations cover the disposal of end-of-life vehicles and emissions from vehicles on the road. However, there is no targeted advice in relation to discharging trade effluent and wastewater into the sewer network, despite this being a by-product of the everyday operations of fleets, dealerships and more. As such, businesses in this field must take responsibility of their environmental footprint themselves, developing processes based on very little structured guidance.

In 2024, Metro Rod undertook research with a cross section of people working at management level in England's automotive sector, to determine how informed the industry is of the role it plays in protecting the environment.

The research has revealed that while there is a high level of awareness of – and compliance with – environmental obligations by businesses working in the automotive sector, many are unaware of the consequences they might face should they ever breach regulations.

The figures also highlight differences in attitudes between businesses of various sizes, pointing to an urgent issue. There's also a lack of understanding regarding methods to reduce pollution incidents, and without further education and wider adoption, the environment faces serious risk.

In this report, we delve into the findings of the research, providing an overview of the automotive industry landscape when it comes to the environment and our collective responsibilities. We also offer advice on how the sector can improve on its current position, arming businesses with the knowledge they need to avoid punishment, but to also make the industry more sustainable and environmentally friendly for years to come.



Please note, this report focuses on best practice in England. Best practice in the remainder of the UK can be found in our link of resources at the end of this document.

Section 1: Attitudes in the Automotive Industry Towards Pollution Prevention

According to Metro Rod’s research, almost all businesses (97%) working in the automotive sector are aware of their environmental obligations when it comes to drainage and wastewater management. While the averages are high across the board for businesses of varying size, the figure drops to 93% for businesses with more than 500 employees. Encouragingly, there is a similar outcome when it comes to adherence with pollution prevention legislation, with almost all businesses (96%) saying their drains comply.

However, achieving high levels of compliance comes with challenges, as three quarters (73%) say trying to keep on top of environmental regulations puts additional pressure on their business, and a further 72% say it’s expensive to remain compliant with regulations. Almost half (48%) say they struggle to understand how to remain compliant with environmental regulations, and 65% say they feel environmental regulation isn’t talked about enough in the industry.

When asked what the main challenges were in trying to achieve compliance with environmental regulation, more than half cited the cost of putting proactive measures in place (58%); more than two fifths a lack of communication as to what is required from water authorities or the environmental agency (42%) means they’re unsure of their obligations; and more than a third referred to the amount of time and resource it requires to put compliant measures in place (37%). Additional challenges included a lack of willingness from senior members of the

business to prioritise compliance (35%), while a quarter said a supporting drainage provider would help their business (26%).

Despite most businesses in this sector prioritising pollution prevention, 11% do not. While nine in ten (87%) consider it a priority, and 81% recognise the importance of a compliant drainage plan, a small but significant proportion may be overlooking these risks. This gap highlights the need for greater awareness and action to ensure industry-wide compliance.

The Benefits of Working With an Expert Drainage Provider



Industry Challenges in Environmental Compliance

When we delve further into the figures from the research, it’s clear that many businesses face significant challenges in maintaining high levels of environmental compliance. Across the board, businesses report that staying on top of environmental regulations is a struggle. The chart below highlights key concerns, including the pressures, costs, and difficulties in understanding and adhering to regulations.

Keeping Up With Environmental Regulations Adds Pressure to the Business:



Remaining Compliant With Regulations Is Expensive:



Struggle to Understand How to Remain Compliant:



Feel Environmental Regulation Isn’t Discussed Enough in the Industry:



The Benefits of Working With an Expert Drainage Provider

The above findings highlight the need for the industry to tailor its approach to both small and large businesses – and respondents clearly agree, with 94% of businesses of varying sizes saying they’d be likely to

work with a drainage provider if it offered a compliance solution or package. The key benefits for these businesses include a reduced environmental footprint (35%), cost savings (19%), and minimised downtime (15%).

At Metro Rod, we’re able to help you achieve all of the above.

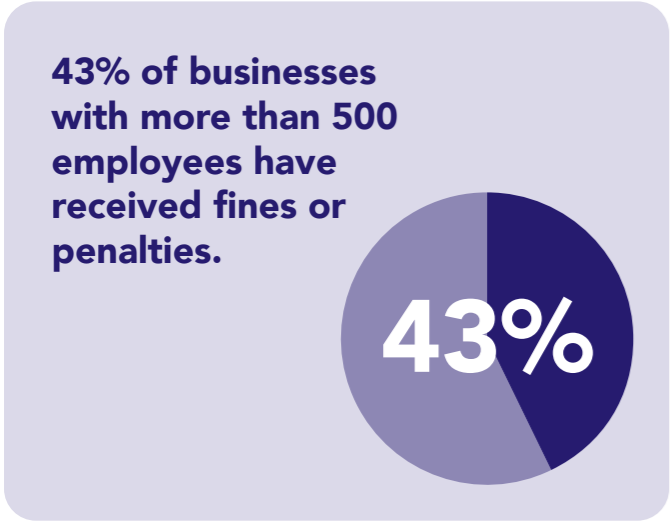
Section 2: A Time for Change in the Automotive Industry

Despite most respondents saying pollution prevention and environmental compliance is a priority for their business, other findings in the research suggest that much more could be done to ensure fleets, dealerships and more are armed with the information and solutions they need to minimise harm to the environment.

Here, we share some important information around pollution prevention, with information on the things you might need to know to help ensure your drainage system is compliant with regulations.

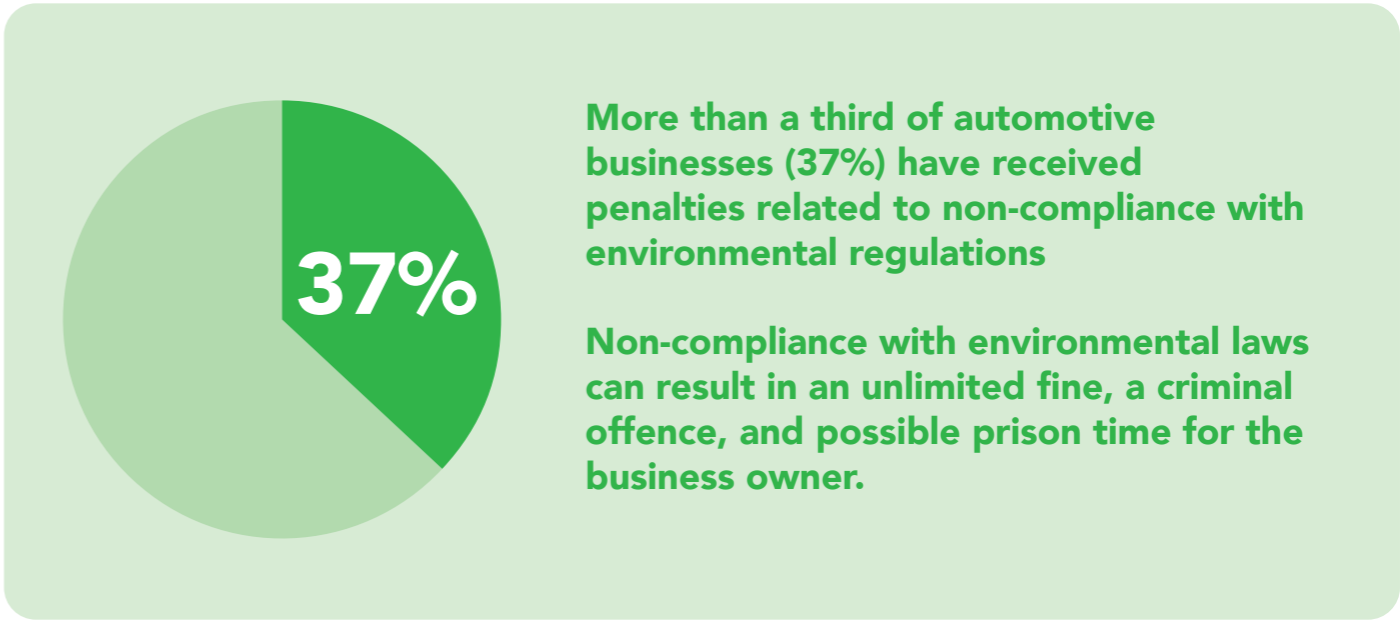
Increased Awareness of Punishments

As part of the research, we found that more than a third of businesses (37%) have received penalties related to non-compliance with environmental regulations. More than one in ten (13%) have received sanctions more than once. The likelihood of this is higher for large businesses, with 43% of businesses with more than 500 employees saying they've received fines or penalties.



Despite many having been subject to fines, there is a widespread lack of awareness as to what the punishment is when you're found to be in breach of environmental regulations. As part of our research we found that just over one in ten in the industry (12%) know that the maximum penalty for non-compliance with environmental legislation is an unlimited fine, the event is classed as a criminal offence, and the business owner could face a prison sentence. In fact, when we presented multiple different scenarios to our respondents, they were most likely to think a breach would result in a £500,000 fine, no criminal offence, and no imprisonment.

At Metro Rod, we think it's vital you know exactly what to expect should you be found to be in breach of environmental regulations, so you can take the necessary steps to avoid the event occurring.



Section 2: A Time for Change in the Automotive Industry

Solutions to Avoid Pollution Incidents

There are multiple systems and solutions that businesses in the automotive sector can put in place to avoid a pollution incident happening on site. However, as part of our research, we found a significant percentage don't know what these solutions are, or don't have them in place.

For example, only seven in 10 businesses in the sector have petrol interceptors on site, and only three quarters know what an interceptor integrity test is. A petrol interceptor, also known as an oil interceptor or petrol separator, is a drainage feature that prevents oil and petrol from contaminating the environment or entering the sewer. An interceptor integrity test is a test conducted to ensure the interceptor is performing to its best potential. Together, both the interceptor and regular testing ensure businesses in the automotive sector are at low risk of pollution incidents.

At Metro Rod, we recommend any business in the automotive field should have a petrol interceptor in place, with periodic inspection and annual integrity testing.

Three in 10 automotive businesses don't have petrol interceptors in place.



General Drain Maintenance

As with interceptors, it is vital that the drainage systems supporting automotive businesses are regularly checked and maintained to ensure they perform at their best.

General maintenance of drains should be undertaken every six months, in line with best practices, however we found in our research that less than a quarter (23%) of businesses are adhering to this.

A further quarter (24%) of businesses have never heard of drain mapping. This is a service undertaken using GPS technology to accurately plot the location and layout of a drainage system and its key features, including the size, depth, directional flow and access point of each pipe. As such, it is an essential part of drainage maintenance, with an engineer able to quickly and efficiently analyse the system and any potential issues.



The Importance of Planned Preventative Maintenance

When it comes to drains, prevention is better than cure. That's why we promote the benefits of planned preventative maintenance (PPM). PPM is important because emergency drainage services can take hours to complete, bringing businesses to a halt and causing safety issues for staff and customers, and they can be very costly. Instead, PPM provides a routine schedule of maintenance which ensures potential future failures can be spotted before they become more severe and lead to pollution incidents, meaning you avoid emergency scenarios.

Despite PPM offering such value to businesses, we found less than half (45%) of those in the automotive sector have a PPM solution in place. Instead, 36% admit to only reaching out to a drainage engineer when they're aware something isn't working properly, and one in ten (11%) only contact a drainage team in an emergency.

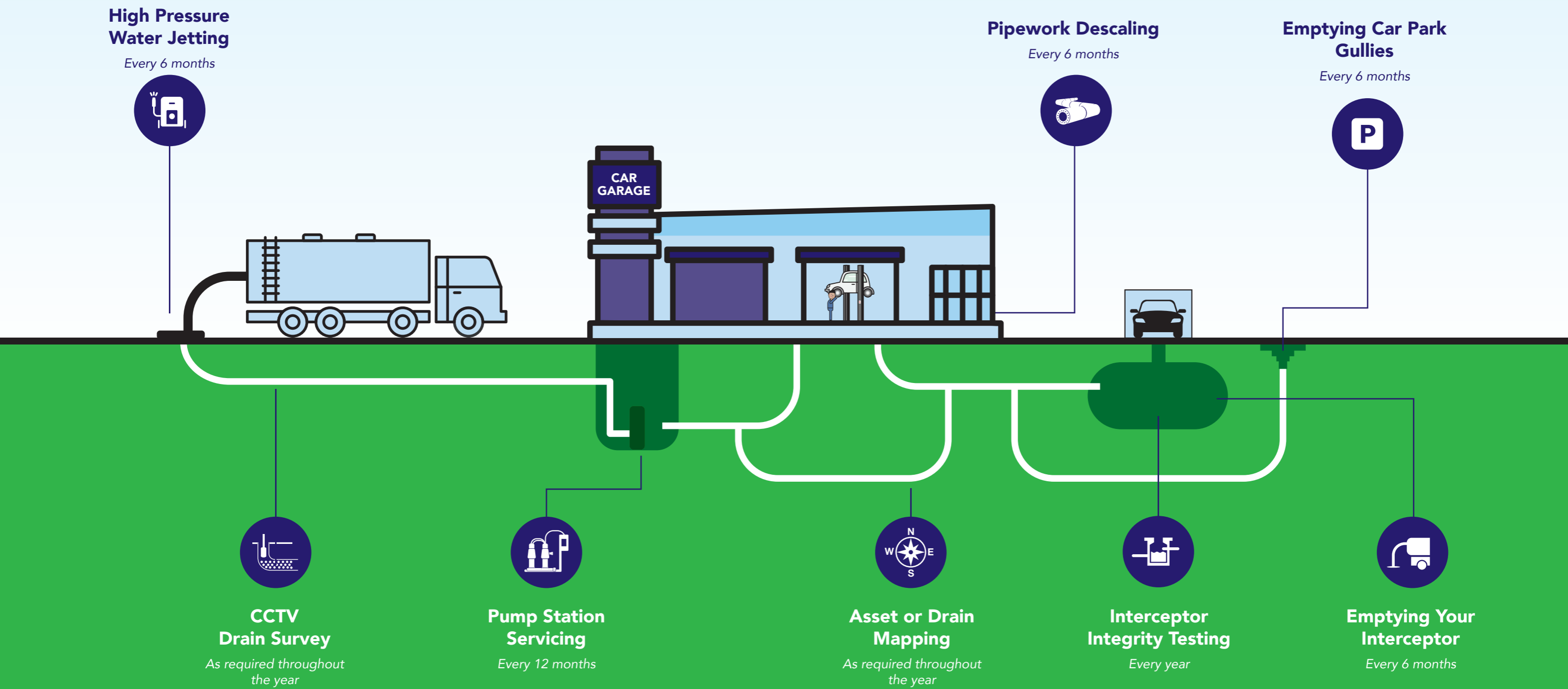
Put simply, not having a maintenance plan in place puts your business at higher risk of pollution incidents, as well as expensive repairs and operational downtime. If you do suffer a pollution incident, you're also likely to receive fines and penalties – which is a risk you simply shouldn't take.

55% of businesses in the automotive sector don't have a PPM solution in place.

Section 3: Metro Rod's Drainage Services and Compliance Support

At Metro Rod, our network of over 40 locally-based teams provide industry-leading drainage solutions, exceptional customer service, and rapid response times. We're here to help you – however complicated, large, remote or inaccessible the problem.

These services, if implemented, can help your automotive business prevent pollution and stay compliant with environmental regulations.



Pollution Prevention Plan in Detail




CCTV Drain Survey

For your site to be as compliant as it can possibly be, it's vital that a drainage map is produced so you can understand where effluent is being discharged, and the quality and condition of your drains. It's helpful to have a record of your drain diameter, the drain material, and where the foul and sewer drains are located, because this can play a big role in your developing a waste management plan.




High Pressure Water Jetting

If you're concerned about the condition of your drains, it's a good idea to have them jetted, and 12 months later, have a camera inspection. If there has been a significant build-up of fats, oils and grease, we would recommend adjusting the maintenance process to every six months; if there is nothing, you can adjust it to every two years.




Pump Station Servicing

Pump stations tend to be found in low lying areas, as they work to lift effluent up to the level of a public sewer. Pump stations should be serviced at least once every six months. If this doesn't happen and they're not maintained and an issue does arise, it can be expensive and result in full site closure for several days or weeks, so servicing should be part of a regular maintenance plan.



Pipework Descaling

This is usually a bigger problem in hard water areas than in soft, but often scale can be linked back to the use of urinals. If not monitored, scale can go on to affect your drains, and you'll experience problems with smells, blockages and flooding if the scale becomes a serious issue. We suggest conducting descaling every six months as part of a PPM schedule.




Asset or Drain Mapping

Asset or drain maps go hand in hand with CCTV drain surveys – but maps provide even greater detail on the drains beneath your site. A CCTV drain survey will be cross referenced with an ordnance survey to provide a map of your drains, but asset mapping gives you an accurate indication of the depth, latitude and longitude of each drain within a 2cm margin. Should a flood or chemical spill happen on site, an asset plan can be drawn upon to understand if, for example, an auto shut off valve is in place to prevent any effluent from entering the drains – which is something a CCTV drain survey wouldn't provide.




Emptying Your Interceptor

The Environment Agency recommends interceptors should be emptied every six months, though this isn't compulsory. It's good practice to keep a record of important information about your interceptor – when it was last emptied and serviced, any specialist maintenance techniques and where it's located on your site, and keep the information handy for everyone in the business to refer to. A further requirement is the installation of an alarm to petrol interceptors which will give a warning in the event a concentration of oil accumulating.



Interceptor Integrity Testing

Interceptor integrity testing checks that oil interceptors are functioning properly by identifying any wear, damage, or blockages that could affect their ability to separate contaminants from wastewater. This essential maintenance ensures the system complies with environmental regulations and continues to protect water quality. To maintain optimal performance and prevent costly issues, we recommend carrying out this test annually.



Emptying Car Park Gullies

Car park gullies play a key role in preventing flooding on site, but their maintenance is often overlooked, and they're usually only given attention when they block – at which point it's too late. We always recommend making car park gullies part of a wider planned preventative maintenance (PPM) schedule to understand the baseline maintenance requirement – it might be 12 months, it might be six. Every site will be different so it's better to think smartly about gullies, than be caught out.

We're Here to Support Your Next Steps

Though some of the findings in our research make for stark reading, it's not too late to take action.

The data shows that more can – and should – be done within the automotive industry to ensure businesses of all sizes are able to take the necessary steps to reduce their impact on the environment, and there is support available to help achieve that.

What's vital now, is that the industry works together to take greater, collective responsibility. Programmes of work and industry partnerships will help raise awareness

of how drainage systems affect environmental challenges while regular maintenance solutions will help mitigate the impact and foster a more sustainable, proactive industry.

As drainage experts, we're committed to helping automotive businesses ensure compliance, avoid fines or penalties, maintain high drain quality to prevent disruptions, protect your reputation, and care for the environment to create a better future.

For support from our team of highly qualified drainage experts, contact Metro Rod today.

Useful resources

Guidance for England:
www.gov.uk/guidance/pollution-prevention-for-businesses

Guidance for Northern Ireland:
www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/pollution

Guidance for Scotland:
www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/pollution-prevention-and-control/

Guidance for Wales:
gov.wales/environment-climate-change



Scan the QR code to contact us for more information.





**Contact Us for More
Information**



0800 66 88 00
metrorod.co.uk

METRO  **ROD**