

Washing down grape harvesters

Taking care when washing down grape harvesters will reduce the risk of pollution and ensure a safe work environment for everyone involved in the vintage season.

There are many grape harvesters operating in the MIA during the vintage season. Machines are often washed between two and three times a day. A 30 minute washdown uses approximately 6,000 litres of water.

When washing down your grape harvester the following Best Management Practices should be undertaken to minimise impacts to the environment and Murrumbidgee Irrigation (MI) infrastructure.

Washdown must take place on-farm

Channel banks must not be used for washing down grape harvesters. Pollutants such as decomposing organic matter oils, fuels, greases and chemical residues could potentially enter the supply and drainage system threatening the quality of our water.

The Environmental Protection Authority requires MI to carefully monitor the quality of both supply and drainage water.

Breaches in water quality standards may jeopardise our water delivery licence, and impact the efficiency of your irrigation business.

Using channel banks to washdown grape harvesters is not only a breach of Murrumbidgee Irrigation contracts but also legislation.

On-Farm washdown sites

The runoff from washing down grape harvesters may cause damage to MI access tracks, road works and irrigation structures. Therefore it is recommended you choose an on-farm contained basin or similar site that is at least 15m away from water bodies where washdown water cannot enter the Company channel system. It is important you select a site that is not likely to become impassable or cause vehicles to become bogged.



PHOTO: Harvesters must not be washed on channel banks. Use an on-farm basin area where the dirty water cannot return to the irrigation or drainage system.

Water used for washdowns

Water used in washdowns must be taken through an approved supply structure on your farm. Water not taken through approved structures is in breach of MI contracts.

Overhead power lines

Before washing down your vehicle check there are no overhead power lines anywhere near the site. Powerlines can be particularly difficult to see at night so it is important a site inspection is carried out during daylight hours. For the health and safety of our water system and the people who work on your harvest team ensure your washdown procedures are suitable and safe.

This paper is provided purely as a guide and does not have any legal effect. This paper cannot be relied on in substitution for, and does not affect the interpretation of any contract, rules or other document that is binding on Murrumbidgee Irrigation Limited or a customer.