

Spill Absorbents – An Overview

What are spill absorbents?

Spill absorbents are any material that will safely and reliably soak up spills of a hazardous nature. However, the key words here are **safely** and **reliably** and many materials are risky when used in hazardous situations. To that end, we have grouped our solutions into 3 types that rise to those measures:

1. Loose Absorbents
2. Polypropylene Sorbents
3. Organic Sorbents

What are Loose Absorbents?

Loose absorbents are granulated material typically supplied in varying size bags. Loose absorbents work particularly well on rough or damaged surfaces, or any situation where pad-style sorbents could prove ineffective.

At Hazero we have 4 different types of loose absorbent:

1. [Mineral Sponge](#) – an inert mineral, white and chalky in texture
2. [Enviropeat](#) – a sphagnum peat, brown and 100% organic
3. [Spill Sorb](#) – a reclaimed cellulose fibre, grey and eco-friendly
4. [Absorbent W](#) – a reclaimed pulp product, floats and selectively absorb hydrocarbons

What are Polypropylene Sorbents?

Polypropylene sorbents are a rugged range of products, made from melt-blown polypropylene, which is a very fast and effective absorbent, and one that will hold and retain liquid like nothing else. It is a synthetic product that has no shelf life, meaning they lose none of their effectiveness, regardless of their age.

Polypropylene sorbents come in 6 different forms:

1. [Pads](#) – roughly 500mm square, and widely used for cleaning up spills on flat surfaces.
2. [Rolls](#) – same as the above but supplied in roll form. Rolls come in 50m lengths with options of 400 or 800mm in width.
3. [Socks](#) – 75mm in diameter, and either 1.2 or 3m in length. Designed to surround a spill and prevent it from spreading further.
4. [Pillows](#) – not unlike what we sleep on, just a bit smaller! Their purpose is for plugging drain grates or going under machinery.

5. **Booms** – a much larger version of the sock, these come in 3m lengths with options of 130 or 200mm in diameter. Booms are designed to float and selectively absorb oils and other hydrocarbons off water.
6. **Sump Pillows** – these are a tube-shaped pillow which will repel water and selectively absorb hydrocarbons from drains and boat bilges. They come with a short rope to secure in place.

What are Organic Sorbents?

While polypropylene sorbents are great performers and can be incinerated, they don't break down in landfill. This is where our Organic Sorbents come in.

Made from sustainably sourced, cellulose fibres, these earth-friendly sorbents come in pad form (460 x 400mm) and are available in both [Oil Only](#) and [Universal](#) types.

What is the difference between Oil Only, Universal and Aggressive sorbents?

It is important to know the difference between the 3 types of sorbent products – noting that the same terminology is also used for spill response kits.

- **Oil Only:** will repel water and selectively absorb oils, fuels and other hydrocarbons. Typically used in marine situations. White in colour.
- **Universal:** also known as General Purpose, will absorb the above liquids but also water-soluble liquids as well, such as coolants, brake fluid, paints and mild chemicals. Grey in colour.
- **Aggressive:** designed to absorb all the above but also most of the nasty acids, alkalis and other harsh chemicals. Bright yellow in hazard recognition.

Oil Only, Universal or Aggressive – what do I need?

Our Polypropylene Compatibility Guide can help you choose the right sorbent to control and clean-up your hazardous substance. Download the guide [here](#).

How much do sorbents absorb?

This will depend entirely on the liquid being absorbed and the viscosity of that liquid. Generally speaking, one sorbent pad will absorb up to 1L of fuel, light oil or mild chemical. For more details on individual products, please refer to the specification sheets on our website.

How do I use sorbents to control and clean-up a hazardous substance spill?

Mostly the process for cleaning up smaller and non-hazardous spills is straight forward. However, there are some good practice guidelines that we have drawn up, which will help safeguard you or those responding, to ensure the impact of the spill is minimised and cleaned up as effectively as possible. Download our guide [here](#).

How do I dispose of used absorbents?

This does vary from region to region around the country, with different requirements coming from regional councils, depending on what facilities they have in the area to manage and take hazardous waste and clean up material.

We recommend you call your local council or visit their website, for disposal instructions specific to your region.

Creating safer working environments

At Hazero our mission is **zero hazards**. Our extensive range of quality products will help you store, contain and control and clean-up dangerous goods and hazardous substances.

View our full range of Controlco Sorbents [here](#).

Need help creating a **safer working environment**? Contact our team today on 0800 688 844 or email us at info@hazero.co.nz. Our team are also available for on-site assessments across New Zealand, [click here to request a site visit](#).

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