

Discharges of Prohibited Substances and Unauthorised Trade Waste Discharges

Dear General Manager

I am writing to clarify important issues in regard to discharges of prohibited substances and unauthorised trade waste discharges to Council Sewerage Systems.

Recently there have been instances where a council has accepted discharges of contaminated groundwater or stormwater to its sewage treatment works without a valid approval under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

The discharge of such prohibited substances to the sewerage system requires Council approval **and** NSW Office of Water concurrence pursuant to section 90 of the *Local Government Act* and clause 28 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*.

In order to avoid serious risks to Council's sewerage system, and consequent failure to comply with its sewage treatment works licence, I draw your attention to the following important provisions of the *Liquid Trade Waste Regulation Guidelines, 2009* (Guidelines). (www.water.nsw.gov.au)

Prohibited substances

Prohibited substances are high risk trade waste discharges. They are prohibited from being discharged to the sewerage system (shown in Table 4 on page 31 of the Guidelines). Rain water, stormwater, subsoil, seepage water and/or groundwater are prohibited substances unless specifically approved by Council, with NSW Office of Water concurrence (3rd paragraph above).

As noted on page 31 of the Guidelines, limited volumes of such substances may be authorised for discharge to the sewerage system in certain circumstances. In each case, the prior concurrence of the NSW Office of Water is required before Council may approve the discharge to its sewerage system. Such discharges may include contaminated groundwater (eg. from remediation sites), discharge of stormwater from open areas under strictly controlled conditions or seepage (such as tip leachate).

Trade waste

In accordance with the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* and the above Guidelines, "trade waste" means all liquid waste other than sewage of a domestic nature.

This means that any waste, unless discharged from a toilet, handwash basin, shower, household kitchen or laundry, needs to be approved as a trade waste under section 90 of the *Local Government Act* prior to acceptance to Council's sewerage system.

Councils are reminded that trade waste includes waste from a **Council operation**, such as water treatment works sludge or backwash water or waste from a recycling or sewer mining facility. A Council approval and an Office of Water concurrence are needed for each such activity.

Pages 16 and 17 of the Guidelines show where NSW Office of Water concurrence is required for discharge of trade waste for each of Concurrence Classifications B (medium risk), S (septic waste) and C (high risk). (www.water.nsw.gov.au)

Council Sewerage system

The Guidelines define a Council Sewerage System as the sewage collection network, transportation and treatment facilities, including effluent and biosolids management.

The discharge of trade waste to any part of the Council Sewerage System, including any part of the sewage treatment works, eg. direct discharge to a sludge lagoon, an effluent pond, a stormwater holding pond, etc. requires Council approval and the relevant NSW Office of Water concurrence (pages 16 and 17 of Guidelines).

Summary

Council should therefore avoid serious risks to its sewerage systems by ensuring it obtains the relevant Office of Water concurrence to its trade waste discharges. Such concurrence will ensure Council's compliance with its sewage treatment works licence and is required for any discharge of **prohibited substances** and for all Classification C discharges to any part of Council's Sewerage System.

A copy of this email has been provided for information to Council's water and sewerage manager and trade water officer.

Any enquiries on this matter should be directed to Padmini Vitharana, Trade Waste Coordinator, on 8281 7429 or email Padmini.vitharana@water.nsw.gov.au.

Regards

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