

Circular No. LWU 13
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New requirements for improving Risk Management for Discharges from Premises with Refuelling Points in Non-metropolitan NSW

This Circular sets out new requirements for improving risk management for discharges from premises with refueling points at service stations or bus/truck depots in non-metropolitan NSW. Such wastewater may contain flammable substances which may pose a high risk to the general public, sewerage system workers and the sewerage infrastructure assets.

Background

The *Liquid Trade Waste Regulation Guidelines 2009¹ (Guidelines)* allow connection of a service station forecourt to the sewerage system subject to providing a suitable collection pit with an inspection aperture and inspecting the pit for the presence of petrol on each occasion prior to starting the pump directing the wastewater to the sewerage system.

Inspections of a number of premises with refueling points such as service stations and bus/truck depot in non-metropolitan NSW have revealed that many of these premises fail to comply with the approval condition which requires the operator of such business to inspect the pit for the presence of petrol on each occasion. The operator may only start the discharge pump if no petrol is detected in the collection pit. In many inspected premises, the collection pit was found to be covered with a heavy duty solid cover, making it not possible for the operator to lift the lid for inspection.

In addition, incidents experienced by a number of LWUs where the above requirements were not complied with have resulted in spilt fuel being pumped to the sewage treatment works causing highly dangerous conditions in the sewerage system as well as failure of the sewage treatment process.

In order to effectively manage the risk from such discharges in non-metropolitan NSW, new risk management requirements have been developed by the NSW Office of Water in consultation with the NSW Water Directorate. These requirements involve the prohibition of connection of new refueling points (ie. service station forecourts and refueling areas of bus/truck depots) to the sewerage system and the monitoring/rectification of existing discharges as detailed below.

¹ *Liquid Trade Waste Regulation Guidelines 2009* - section 7.5 on page 267 and 268 of Appendix F and condition 96 on page 225 of Appendix E.

New risk management requirements for discharges from refuelling points effective from 1 June 2012

New Premises

1. Connection of any discharge from refuelling points at service stations and other premises to LWU sewerage systems is prohibited effective from 1 June 2012.

Business operators of such premises may remove spilled fuel by dry methods and/or direct any wastewater from the refuelling points to a blind sump with an appropriate capacity. Such a sump must be pumped out by a suitable contractor for off-site management, when required. Significant cost savings would accrue to businesses through avoiding the need to instal an oil interceptor/separator and pump.

Existing premises

2. Existing businesses with a refuelling point (ie. service station forecourts, and refuelling areas of bus/truck depots) may continue to discharge to LWU sewerage systems in accordance with the LWU's prior approval (and the Office of Water concurrence).
3. If an existing business is sold, then the new operator may continue to discharge to the LWU's sewerage system with an appropriate approval in force.

For both items 2 and 3 above, the LWU needs to inspect the existing premises to determine whether it complies with the requirements of the above *Guidelines* for an accessible lid to the pit. For example, the pit needs to have a suitable inspection aperture (eg. covered with a grated lid) and that staff are aware of the pit location and the requirements. If so, the LWU needs to remind the business operator to **only operate the discharge pump** from the pit to the sewerage system in accordance with the condition of approval shown below:

"On each occasion before starting the pump, the collection pit must be checked for petrol. If petrol is detected in the pit, the pump must not be started. The pit contents shall then be disposed of to an appropriate waste disposal facility and must not be discharged to the sewerage system.

(Reason: NOW and Council requirement to protect the sewerage system, worker health and safety and the environment) "

If the existing pit does not have an inspection aperture, the business will be required to either modify the existing pit in order to comply with the above requirements or to disconnect the discharge from the refuelling point to the sewerage system. In the event of disconnection, the business will need to arrange for tankering off-site of any wastewater collected in the pit.

4. If the existing premises with a refuelling point is refurbished, then the discharge from this area must be disconnected from the LWU sewerage system. Where the premises do not have other trade waste discharges (eg. from a restaurant, vehicle wash, mechanical workshop), trade waste fees and charges would no longer apply.

Further information on this matter is available from the NSW Office of Water by contacting Mrs Padmini Vitharana, Trade Waste Coordinator on 8281 7429 or padmini.vitharana@water.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely



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