

Environment Protection Notices (EPNs) currently being issued in relation to Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTPs) require the responsible person to develop a plan to appropriately manage sewage sludge generated by the sewage treatment process.

This guideline has been prepared to offer guidance to the person responsible to ensure sufficient information is contained in the Sewage Sludge Management Plan to satisfy the standard condition.

Condition:

Sewage Sludge Management Plan

1. A Sewage Sludge Management Plan must be submitted to the Director for approval within 12 months of the date on which these conditions take effect, or by a date specified in writing by the Director.
2. The Sewage Sludge Management Plan must be prepared in accordance with the EPA *Sewage Sludge Management Plan Guidelines* and the *Tasmanian Biosolids Reuse Guidelines*.
3. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the Director, sewage sludge must be managed in accordance with the Sewage Sludge Management Plan approved in writing by the Director.

Background:

The development of a sewage sludge management plan for a WWTP is an opportunity to holistically consider sludge management for an individual WWTP, taking into consideration sludge accumulation rates, sludge quality management, suitable dewatering technologies and appropriate end use or disposal.

If the person responsible makes the decision to produce a generic plan to cover several WWTPs, as may be the case for TasWater, it is important that the generic plan provides a sufficient level of detail for each WWTP to comply with the requirements listed below.

To assist in the development of an acceptable plan the person responsible should refer to the following documents:

- The *Tasmanian Biosolids Reuse Guidelines, 2020* (the Guidelines) outline the practical implementation requirements for biosolids reuse, including the sampling and analysis requirements in order to appropriately classify biosolids and determine acceptable reuse or disposal options.
- The *Approved Management Method for Biosolids Reuse, July 2020* (the AMM) provides the minimum legal requirements for the classification and reuse of biosolids in Tasmania.

Components of a Sewage Sludge Management Plan:

In considering a sewage sludge management plan submitted as a result of the condition above, the EPA will establish whether there is sufficient detail provided to determine whether:

1. There are satisfactory controls in place to ensure sludge contaminant quality will be consistently maintained (e.g. overview of significant trade waste inputs and any quality control issues).
2. The sludge production rate has been determined and used in the WWTP sludge management proposal. For WWTPs which have intermittent sludge removal, a schedule for sludge removal which will ensure excessive sludge build up does not occur, should be included.
3. Dewatering options have been considered and any associated onsite sludge storage facilities detailed. Management of potential odours, particularly during dewatering, should be included.
4. The sludge stabilisation process is described. An overview of sludge treatment and handling at the WWTP should be given, including details of the digestion process to allow stabilisation grading to be determined.
5. Sludge contaminant quality is known. The plan should either include analysis results and classification conducted in accordance with the Guidelines or initial test results to give an indication of the likely sludge classification.
6. The sludge quality monitoring program fully complies with the Guidelines requirements including collection methods and frequency. This methodology needs to be detailed.
7. Sufficient consideration to the waste management hierarchy has been given. Details of sludge reuse/disposal options considered should be included and the rationale for the chosen option detailed. Proposals for landfill disposal of Class 1 or Class 2 Biosolids will not be considered favourably in most circumstances.
8. Transportation and handling of sewage sludge (a Controlled Waste) and biosolids (a General Waste) will meet regulatory requirements. Refer to the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control (Waste Management) Regulations 2020*.
9. Any biosolids reuse proposal will meet regulatory requirements. An assessment of the reuse site against the Guidelines requirements should be included when available.
10. Any biosolids reuse activity detailed in the plan has appropriate approvals or there is sufficient commitment to acquire such approvals. Where the person responsible has designated an appropriate site for biosolids reuse, the following documentation supporting the reuse proposal should be included:
 - 10.1. Council approval - necessary approvals vary across different municipalities. The Sewage Sludge Management Plan should detail consultation with the appropriate Council;
 - 10.2. EPA approval for Level 2 biosolids reuse – if reuse application is going to occur at a rate which exceeds the Level 1 application rate detailed in the AMM, EPA approval will be required.

Maximum application rates for Level 1 Activity:

 - The application rate per three year period is less than 50% of the Nitrogen Limited Application Rate or less than 50 wet tonnes per hectare (**whichever is the lesser**)
 - Please note: strict adherence to the AMM requires the Nitrogen Limiting Application Rate to always be calculated, regardless of which limit is going to be applied.
11. Appropriate records management, in accordance with Guideline requirements, will be in place.