

## Introduction

This guide gives instructions to persons responsible for operating sewerage reticulation infrastructure on assessing the environmental and human health hazard of sewage spills, to determine the nature of the notification that needs to be made to the Director, EPA.

While management actions should also be considered based on the hazard level and potential impacts of any spill, this is beyond the scope of this document. More stringent notification requirements apply to sewage spills from level 2 wastewater treatment plants.

Following this guide will assist in achieving compliance with Section 32 of the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994*, for notification of incidents to the Director, EPA. Additional requirements for notifications to municipal councils or other organisations may also apply.

## Notification Procedure

This guideline establishes three levels of notification to the Director, EPA – Not Notifiable, Notifiable and Critically Notifiable. Notifiable and Critically Notifiable spills must be reported to the Director, EPA as soon as reasonably practical but within 24 hours, by calling 1800 005 171 with the details below.

Critically Notifiable spills should be reported within 2 hours of becoming aware of the spill, with regular updates provided to EPA officers, where possible. Updates for Notifiable and Critically Notifiable spills must be provided when requested by the EPA.

Other notification requirements and consultation must be considered e.g. Local Council Environmental Health Officer (EHO), Department of Health (DoH), ShellMAP Regulatory Services, stakeholders downstream of, or otherwise in a spill-affected area.

## Recording & Reporting a Sewage Spill

If it is determined that a spill is Notifiable using the calculator on page 2, the following information is required:

### Details of the incident

- a. Caller's name and job title
- b. Date and time the person responsible for the activity became aware of the spill.
- c. Date and time the spill was first reported and by whom. (i.e. Member of the public or employee)
- d. Estimated time when the spill started.
- e. Location of the spill. Provide nearest street address or landmark and sewerage network structure.
- f. Is the spill ongoing?
  - a. If not, over what period did the spill occur and what is the estimated volume?
  - b. If ongoing, what is the rate of release and estimated volume at the time of notification?
- g. Level of treatment the sewage has received (e.g. raw, primary screening, secondary)
- h. Name of the parent wastewater treatment plant.

### Circumstances under which the spill occurred

- i. Indicate the cause of the spill, including how and why it occurred. Note whether the spill was caused by wet weather or inflow and infiltration.
- j. Indicate whether there have been previous spills at this location.

### Immediate action taken

- k. What action has been taken to stop the spill?
- l. What action has been taken to determine or mitigate the impact of the spill (i.e. monitoring, signage, media)?
- m. Have samples been collected? When and where?
- n. Who else has been notified?

If a final estimated spill volume has not been determined and/or initial response actions were not complete at the time of notification, a written report must subsequently be provided to the EPA to allow for incident closeout. EPA officers may request an additional full incident investigation report to be provided.

## Hazard Calculator

The hazard calculator provides a tool to assess notification requirements, based on the volume of the spill and the location. If the volume is unknown, an estimate of flow must be used.

Description	Volume estimate
<b>1. Minor</b>	Less than 1,000L OR up to 0.25L per second with duration less than 60 minutes. (approximately equivalent to a garden tap running fully open)
<b>2. Moderate</b>	Less than 10,000L OR up to 2.5L per second with duration less than 60 minutes. (approximately equivalent to fire hydrant cracked open)
<b>3. Major</b>	Less than 50,000L OR up to 14L per second with duration less than 60 minutes. (approximately equivalent to a 100mm pipe running full)
<b>4. Maximum</b>	More than 50,000L OR approximately 14L per second with duration more than 60 minutes (approximately equivalent to a 100mm pipe running full)

Description	Location description
<b>1. Low</b>	Areas predominantly made up of industrial businesses or factories with a limited residential population. Rural areas of low population and little conservation value, or contained to private property where exposure to people is unlikely. Discharge to any waterway including creeks, rivers and the ocean, directly or via stormwater system, with low/no recreational use and where exposure to people is unlikely and there is good dilution.
<b>2. Medium</b>	General residential areas including areas of low-medium density. Waterways with low dilution, but with limited likelihood of environmental harm or exposure to people.
<b>3. High</b>	Spills to land with sensitive use (includes, but is not limited to, areas such as playgrounds, schools, sporting facilities, public reserves & National Parks, and high use Central Business District and retail areas). Areas of high residential density. Any discharge to water, which may reach an aquaculture facility, a known recreational water area, or a pristine waterway.

## Hazard Calculator

Location	Volume			
	Minor <1kL	Moderate 1-10kL	Major 10 – 50kL	Maximum >50kL
Low 1	Not Notifiable	Not Notifiable	<b>Notifiable</b>	<b>Notifiable</b>
Medium 2	Not Notifiable	<b>Notifiable</b>	<b>Notifiable</b>	<b>Critical</b>
High 3	<b>Notifiable</b>	<b>Notifiable</b>	<b>Critical</b>	<b>Critical</b>

## To report spills, call the EPA on 1800 005 171

If you are unsure whether a spill needs to be notified, it is best practice to call.

**Notification to other organisations may be required, for example Local Council EHO, DoH, ShellMAP Regulatory Services and downstream stakeholders.**