

Water pollution

Water is a scarce and essential natural resource. Conserving and maintaining water quality is especially important in Australia, the world's driest inhabited continent.

Queensland's streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands, estuaries and open coastal waters are essential to maintaining the health of our environment and our quality of life. Preventing or reducing water pollution improves water quality and helps to underpin healthy natural ecosystems.

In the urban environment, roadside gutters and drains feed stormwater to our creeks, rivers and marine environment. Contaminants such as silt and mud may cause failure of the stormwater system and flooding issues, while chemical contaminants may harm aquatic animals. We all need to play our part in ensuring that contaminants do not enter the stormwater system.



In Queensland, the *Environmental Protection Regulation 2008* contains a list of prescribed water contaminants. It is an offence to deposit a prescribed water contaminant in roadside gutters, stormwater drainage, or in our creeks and rivers.

What is a prescribed water contaminant?

Prescribed water contaminants include pollutants such as chemicals, oil, paint, animal matter, plant matter, rubbish, sewage and wastewater from outdoor cleaning processes. For a complete list of prescribed water contaminants, refer to page 2.

Disposing of prescribed water contaminants

Under Section 440ZG of the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, a person must not:

- (a) unlawfully deposit a prescribed water contaminant—
 - (i) in waters; or
 - (ii) in a roadside gutter or stormwater drainage; or
 - (iii) at another place, and in a way, so that the contaminant could reasonably be expected to wash, blow, fall or otherwise move into waters, a roadside gutter or stormwater drainage;

Example of a place for subparagraph (iii)

 - a building site where soil may be washed into an adjacent roadside gutter
- (b) unlawfully release stormwater run-off into waters, a roadside gutter or stormwater drainage that results in the build-up of earth in waters, a roadside gutter or stormwater drainage.

Substantial penalties apply in circumstances where prescribed water contaminants are disposed of unlawfully. If you require advice on how to dispose of a prescribed water contaminant, contact Council.

List of prescribed water contaminants

This is a list of all materials which are prescribed as water contaminants under the *Environmental Protection Regulation 2008* - Schedule 9.

1. a chemical, or chemical waste containing a chemical
Examples—
 - biocide, including herbicide, fungicide and pesticide
 - chemical that causes biochemical or chemical oxygen demand
 - chemical toxicant for which guidelines are prescribed in the document 'Australian and New Zealand guidelines for fresh and marine water quality'
 - degreasing agent
2. a gas other than oxygen
3. a liquid containing suspended or dissolved solids
4. a liquid that has a temperature different by more than 2°C from ambient water temperature
5. animal matter, including dead animals, animal remains and animal excreta, and water used to clean animals, animal enclosures or vehicles used for transporting animals
6. ashes, clay, gravel, sediment, stones and similar organic or inorganic matter
7. a substance that has a pH outside the range 6.5 to 8.5
8. building and construction materials, including bitumen, brick, cement, concrete and plaster
9. building, construction and demolition waste, including bitumen, brick, concrete cuttings, plaster and waste water generated by building, construction or demolition
10. clinical waste
11. glass, metal parts, paper, piping, plastic and scrap metal
12. industrial waste
13. oil, including, for example, petroleum or vegetable based oil
14. paint, paint scrapings or residues, paint sludge, water used for diluting paint or washing painting utensils, and waste from paint stripping
15. plant matter, including, for example, bark, lawn clippings, leaves, mulch, pruning waste, sawdust, shavings, woodchip and other waste from forest products
16. putrescible waste, including, for example, food scraps
17. sewage and sewage residues, whether treated or untreated, and any other matter containing faecal coliforms or faecal streptococci, including, for example, waste water pumped out from a septic tank
18. vehicles and components of vehicles, including, for example, batteries and tyres
19. waste and waste water, generated from indoor cleaning, including, for example, waste from carpet or upholstery cleaning and steam cleaning
20. waste and waste water, generated from outdoor cleaning, including, for example, waste generated from high pressure water blasting of commercial or industrial premises, fuel dispensing areas, plant or equipment, roofs, streets, vehicles and wharves
21. waste generated from repairing or servicing motor vehicles, including, for example, engine coolant, grease, lubricants and oil
22. waste water, including backwash from swimming pools, condensate from compressors, water from air-conditioning or cooling systems and waste water from grease traps