

UPC15



Auckland
Regional Council
TE RAUHITANGA TAIAO

Pressure Water-Blasting

If you use water-blasting equipment, then you must consider the potential your activity has to pollute the environment. This Pollutionfacts pamphlet will help identify whether you could be causing land or water pollution and provides advice for water-blasting in a legal and environmentally responsible manner.

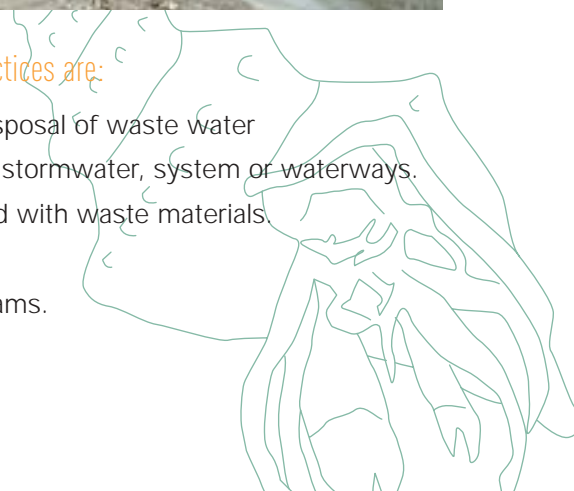
There are many pollutants associated with water-blasting wastes including:

- cleaning solutions or other additives.
- materials removed from the surface being cleaned (including algae, mould, lichen or other organic wastes, oil/grease, paint, sludge, dirt, heavy metals and bird droppings).
- compounds produced from reactions between the cleaning solution and the materials removed from the surface being cleaned.
- chlorine in the mains water.
- highly alkaline wastewater from concrete driveways and structures such as roofs.



Some common indicators of poor works practices are:

- no provision for the collection and disposal of waste water
- wash water in the road side curbing, stormwater, system or waterways.
- stormwater grates and drains blocked with waste materials.
- discolouration in waterways.
- dead fish and other creatures in streams.



Whether you use high or low pressure, hot or cold water, with or without cleaning additives, the resulting wastewater must be collected for proper treatment and disposal. If not, it will probably enter and pollute a natural waterbody such as a stream, the sea or a groundwater aquifer. This harms the creatures that live in streams and the sea and reduces our use and enjoyment of the environment.

The solutions offered in this pamphlet are not exhaustive. Other solutions will exist given the variety of pressure water-blasting methods and the work environments encountered.

You may feel these guidelines are not practical, or that the suggested solutions are just too hard or expensive to implement. Before you carry out your water-blasting activities with no controls in place, please consider that;

If your company generates a water-blasting waste and does not dispose of it properly, then you are contributing to the pollution problems of the Auckland region...and breaking the law!



If you have any concerns or would like advice on your proposed solutions please contact a Pollution Control/Prevention Officer at the ARC. By making a few simple changes to your site and daily practices you will be contributing to a pollution free environment for us all to enjoy both now and in the future.

What are the Common Excuses for Not Doing the Right Thing?

'You will put me and my workers out of business':

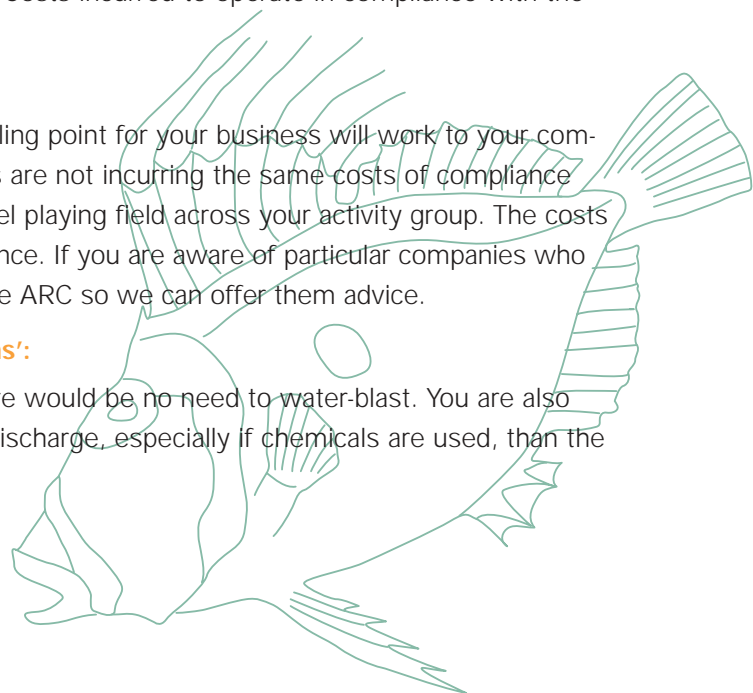
The choice of industry you work in is yours. Part of your choice means that you must be take all necessary steps to deal with the waste produced by your operation. Costs incurred to operate in compliance with the law are simply a cost of doing business.

'They will just hire somebody else':

Using an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) as a selling point for your business will work to your company's benefit. If you are concerned that your competitors are not incurring the same costs of compliance please be aware that the ARC has a goal of creating a level playing field across your activity group. The costs of non-compliance are often greater than those of compliance. If you are aware of particular companies who are not complying you can report them in confidence to the ARC so we can offer them advice.

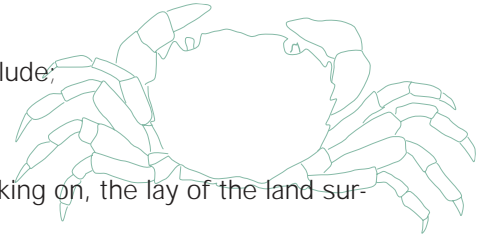
'But it's the same material that comes off when it rains':

If it is the same material that comes off when it rains there would be no need to water-blast. You are also creating a more concentrated and potentially more toxic discharge, especially if chemicals are used, than the rain would wash off.



Your Environmental Management Plan:

For the water-blasting industry an Environmental Management Plan must include;



SITE ASSESSMENT

Determining the location of the building, structure or surface you will be working on, the lay of the land surrounding it, where the drains are and where the wastewater will flow to.

WASTE COLLECTION

Determining how wastes can be collected and retained and the equipment required to achieve this.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Making sure all liquid and solid waste is disposed of appropriately. This may include the use of a waste contractor and/or talking to the local council about disposal to the sewer.

SPILL RESPONSE

Having procedures in place to deal with an accidental spill.

What's in it for you?

- Greater awareness of the impact of water-blasting wastes on the environment.
- Good business management, including a reduction of your business' environmental impacts, and creating potential marketing opportunities to showcase your business's environmental performance. Demonstration of your environmental compliance/management plan as part of a contract or tender process will encourage and appease public expectations that water-blasting will not pollute the environment.
- Compliance with legal and environmental responsibilities thus avoiding fines and other penalties.
- A cleaner work environment and improved efficiency from less time spent cleaning up discharges from increased staff awareness and training.
- Conservation of the environment which increases company pride and improves corporate image.
- The knowledge that you are no longer polluting waterways and threatening your or other's leisure activities, including swimming, fishing and boating.



BOTTOMLINE:

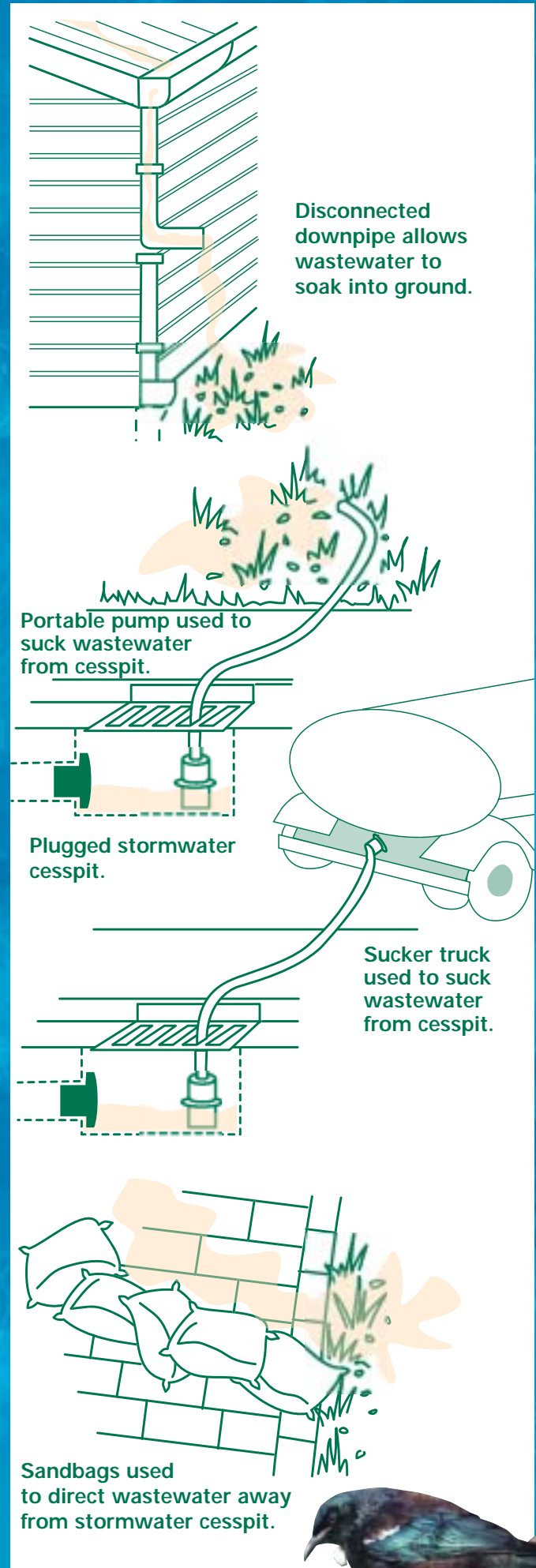
If you or your staff discharge contaminants (including water-blasting wastewater) to the stormwater system you are exposing yourself to serious financial and legal risk, as well as unnecessarily harming our environment.

Before you Start

- When water-blasting roofs disconnect downpipes and install pipes that allow wastewater to be directed to an appropriate soakage area on-site (e.g. lawn or garden), holding tank for off-site disposal or the sanitary sewer.
- Have equipment available that can be used to contain or divert wastewater.

During and After Water-blasting

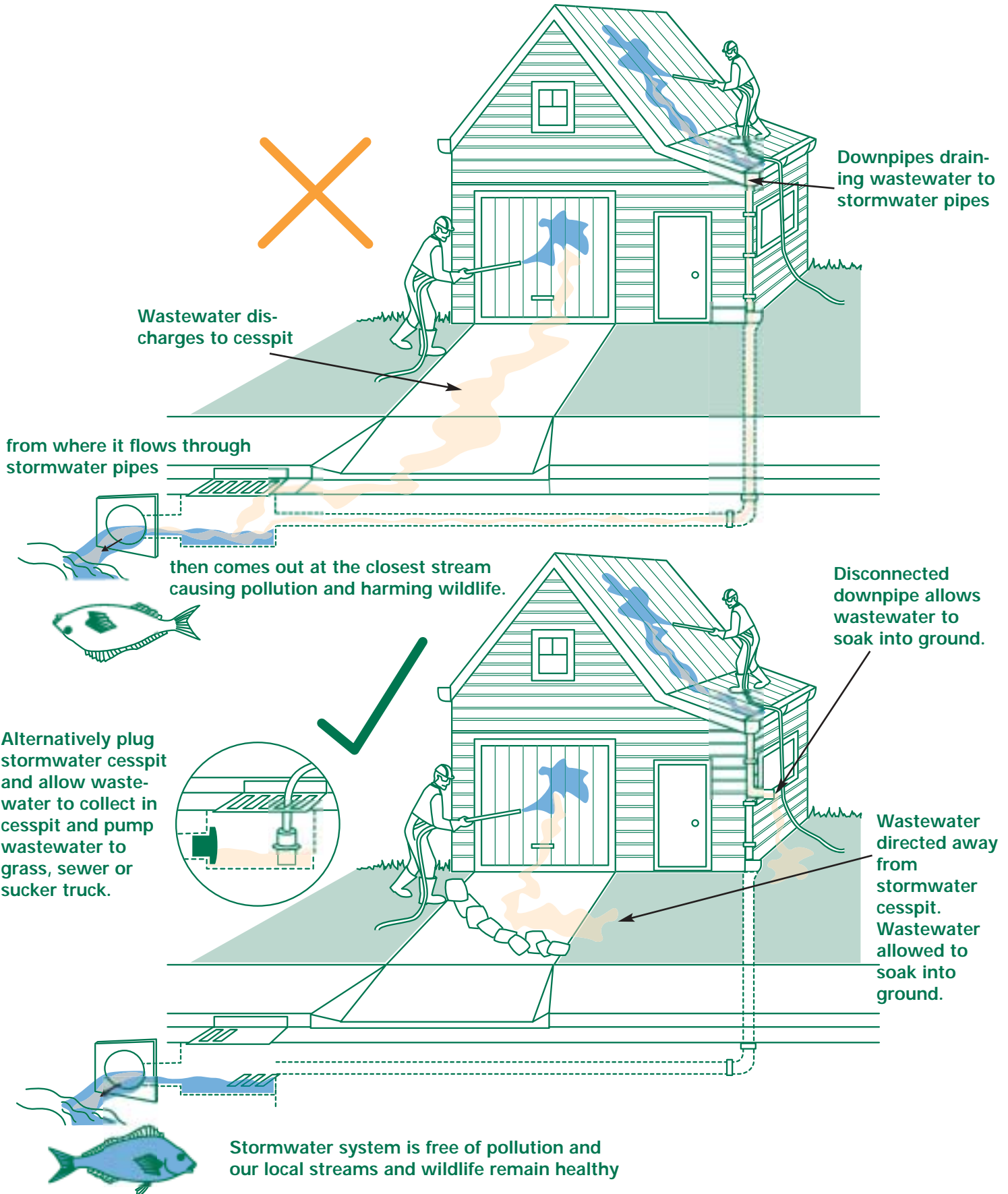
- Wastewater generated from water-blasting activities using water and cleaning chemicals may be diverted and discharged onto unsealed ground where it can soak in, providing there is no runoff to the stormwater system.
- If diversion to grass is inappropriate then the water may drain along the gutter to a stormwater cesspit that has been plugged. The water can then be pumped/bucketed out either to unsealed ground, to the sanitary sewer or to a holding tank to be taken away for appropriate disposal. There are a number of relatively inexpensive and easily portable pumps available. Ensure the solids produced by the water-blasting activities are collected and disposed of appropriately.
- All wastewater and particulate matter generated by water-blasting that may contain chemicals such as paint stripper, degreaser, hypochlorite or other algicides, lead based paints or metal coatings, must be collected and disposed of appropriately as a trade waste into the sanitary sewer, (with the approval of the local council) or via a commercial waste contractor.



Here are some options for consideration when assessing your water-blasting activities:

SITE PREPARATION

Assess the site with care when quoting for a job. Determine any potential problems before you begin and ensure you can do the job successfully while protecting the environment and complying with your legal responsibilities. Before starting ensure that appropriate measures are in place to contain any waste runoff for appropriate disposal.



Training of Staff

- Educate your employees/franchisees on proper wastewater disposal methods and provide incentives to ensure that they use these practices in the field.
- Ensure your company has in place a Spill Response Plan that details what to do in the event of a spill.
- Provide employees/franchisees with spill response materials so that spills and unauthorised discharges can be cleaned up appropriately. If you cannot clean up the discharge, make other arrangements with a suitable company to ensure the spill/discharge is cleaned up without entering the storm water system.

AT HOME

If you must water-blast your property for example; steps, driveway, or equipment, then direct the wastewater so the run off soaks into the ground, or take equipment to a commercial wash facility so that all wastes go to the sanitary sewer.

Never use solvents or degreasing agents when discharging your wastes onto the ground.

By making a few simple changes to the way you carry out your daily practices, you will help contribute to a pollution free environment for us all to enjoy both now and in the future.



REMEMBER

- **Even small quantities of seemingly harmless materials can damage the environment.**
- **It is ILLEGAL to cause or allow water, land or air pollution.**
- **Always have a current, site specific Spill Response Plan, with equipment handy and your staff well trained, so that all spilt material can be cleaned up immediately and safely.**

If you need advice on any of these matters, call a Pollution Control Officer on (09) 366-2000 - we are keen to help.

For more information phone 09 366 2000

To report pollution phone the Pollution Hotline 09 377 3107

**THE BIG CLEAN UP.
0800 JOIN IN.**



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FOR WAYS TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT, JOIN THE BIG CLEAN UP, www.arc.govt.nz OR PHONE 0800 JOIN IN (56 46 46)