

Reporting Pollution Incidents – environment protection licence holders

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Always call 000
if it is an emergency
www.epa.nsw.gov.au



EPA Enviro Line 131 555
info@epa.nsw.gov.au
24 hours
7 days a week

Licensees must report pollution incidents to the NSW EPA and other relevant authorities. All reports should go to the Environment Line on **131 555**.

What you need to do when an incident occurs



If a pollution incident happens you need to:

- implement your Pollution Incident Response Management Plan. All licensees should have a plan to ensure that everyone knows what to do if an incident occurs. This may include shutting down equipment and who to contact
- if there is an immediate threat to human health or property, contact 000 first for emergency assistance
- take all necessary action, if safe, to minimise the size and any adverse effects of the incident.



What type of pollution incidents need reporting?



- Any incident that causes or threatens to cause material harm to the environment should be reported.
- A "Pollution incident" is defined in the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*.
- This includes environmental harm within and beyond the boundaries of a premises.
- An incident could be air, noise, water or land pollution. Examples include a sewage overflow, excessive dust that goes beyond a premises and chemical leaks.

Your checklist



Could a spill or leak related to your activity harm the environment?

If so:

- are the people carrying out the activity, including casual or shift workers, or contractors, aware of their duty to notify?
- do they know who to notify?
- do they know how to notify?
- is the need for notification signposted and included in your operation and emergency procedures?

What happens after you report?



Once you report a pollution incident the EPA may:

- attend the incident site to provide advice, written or verbal directions and oversight of the containment or clean-up
- begin an investigation
- once it is safe, conduct an inspection, take photos or samples and examine equipment
- do interviews and require information and records to be provided.

What you can expect from the EPA?



• The EPA supports emergency service organisations to ensure good environmental outcomes from incidents and emergencies.

- We may require you to engage specialist equipment or contractors to contain and remove any spilt material from the incident.
- Complex investigations will take time for the EPA. We will advise you how long we think it will take.
- We will keep you informed of the process and the outcome.



What are the penalties?



Failure to report a pollution incident posing material harm to the environment is an offence. The maximum penalty is \$2 million for corporations, or \$500,000 for individuals.



If you have any questions, please call our Environment Line on 131 555 or email info@epa.nsw.gov.au