



Report 03.65
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Committee Environment Committee
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Pollution control report for the period 11 November 2002 to 23 February 2003

1. Purpose

To report on incident response, investigation and audit work undertaken by Greater Wellington's Pollution Control team during the reporting period.

2. Background

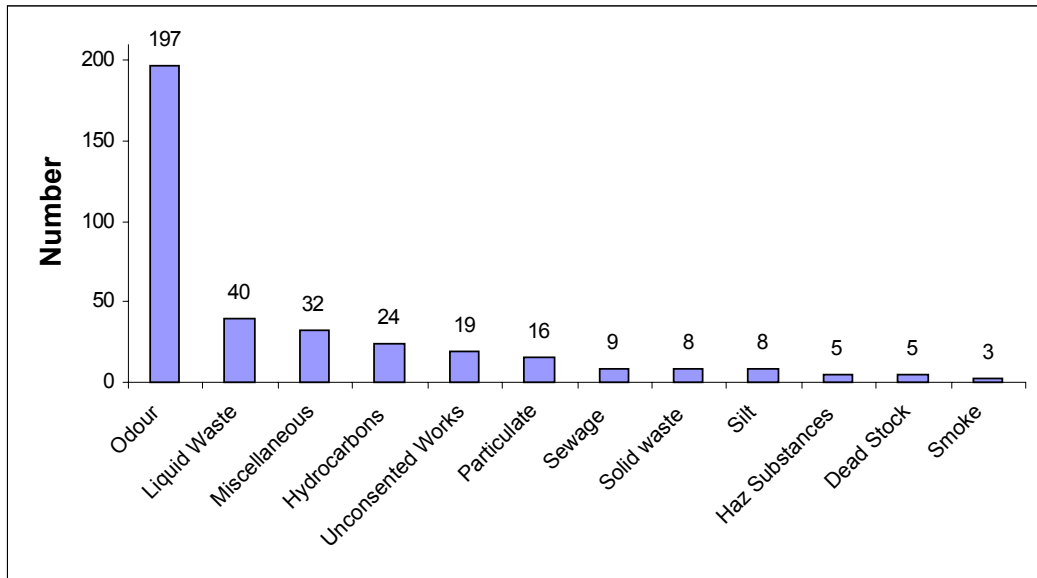
The Resource Investigations Department provides proactive and responsive services to combat environmental pollution in the Western Wellington Region. These pollution control initiatives are summarised below:

- 24-hour Incident Response, which deals with pollution complaints, environmental incidents and alleged non-compliance with the regional plans.
- Take Charge, a pollution prevention programme, aimed at improving the environmental performance of small to medium sized industry.
- Special Projects, which include the development of resource materials, or targeted investigations to establish baseline conditions, track trends, characterise environmental problems, and define our priorities for future initiatives.
- Selected Land Use Register, a database of sites in the region where hazardous activities/industries are known or suspected to have been present, and as a consequence have an increased chance of being contaminated. This database is maintained in accordance with proposed guidelines issued by the Ministry for the Environment (MfE).

3. Incidents

A total of 366 complaints were received during this reporting period. The types of complaints received during this reporting period are summarised in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Type of Incident Complaints



The majority of complaints were odour related, and attributed in the main to industrial sites in Wellington (an asphalt plant in Tawa, a meat-works in Ngauranga Gorge and facilities at the Carey’s Gully complex). The most significant incidents that occurred during this period were:

- A small oil spill at the Shell asphalt storage site at Burnham Wharf, Wellington, resulting in minor water and shoreline contamination around the wharf.
- An overflow of 200-300 litres of milk from a silo into a stream at Kapiti Cheeses, Kapiti Coast. This was caused by the failure of an automatic shut-off valve. The milk was successfully contained and removed without significant environmental pollution.
- A sewer blockage resulting in a substantial sewage discharge into Evans Bay over a 24 hour period. WCC arranged for removal of the blockage and erection of warning signs in the affected area.
- A discharge of substantial quantities of firewater into the Hutt River estuary at the Hikoikoi Walkway from a major building fire at Petone, Lower Hutt.

The time between receiving an incoming complaint and reaching the source of the complaint (response time) is used as a performance indicator for the incident response service. Table 1 shows that the officers from both Consents Management and the Pollution Control Team achieved a high level of responsiveness during this reporting period.

Table 1: Response Time Performance Summary

Target Response Time	Average Response Time	Conformance Level
Red (60 minutes)	38 minutes	86 %
Yellow (24 hours)	6 hours	97 %
Blue (30 days)	2 days	100 %

4. Take charge

A strategy for implementing *Take Charge* identified service stations as a priority focus for this programme. *Take Charge* visits to service stations are now underway. The introduction of *Take Charge* allows the Pollution Response Team to move into to a more proactive pollution control phase.

5. Special projects

Our new Incident Response Database went live on 24 February 2003. The new database will significantly improve our ability to analyse and report on pollution incidents.

We are continuing to co-operate with Territorial Authorities in the region to prepare a standardised pamphlet advising how trade and domestic premises can avoid stormwater pollution.

The Response Manual for Sewage Discharges is being revised in collaboration with Hutt Valley Health and Territorial Authorities. The final draft is due in April 2003.

A project proposal has been developed to characterise 'background' concentrations of contaminants in soils across the region. The information will provide a useful reference for determining the severity of industrial site contamination, and to establish appropriate clean-up targets.

6. Selected land use register

The Selected Land Use Register is currently being verified in accordance with the draft MfE guidelines. This involves obtaining physical data to verify that hazardous activities and industries actually took place at sites recorded on the register. Approximately 90% of the 1159 sites in the Western region have been verified, and another 85 sites have been added to the database as a result of the verification process. Work is due to start on verifying 328 sites in the Wairarapa region the end of February. At present, only 61% of these sites have been validated.

7. Enforcement action

The following is a summary of enforcement action by the Pollution Control Team during this reporting period.

Infringement notices

- Kapiti Coast District Council for a sludge discharge to land at Waikanae Water Treatment Plant.
- Chatham Island Seafoods Limited, Lower Hutt for unconsented works in a wetland (under appeal).

Abatement notices

- Chatham Island Seafoods Limited, Lower Hutt to reinstate wetland (under appeal).
- A water shortage direction restricting the use of water taken from Waitohu Stream was issued on 24 February.

8. Communication

No further public communication is necessary for this report.

9. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (1) receive the report; and*
- (2) note the contents.*

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Attachment 1: Incident Response Summary