

Report 05.379
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Committee Environment Committee
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Pollution Control Report for the period 9 June to 8 July 2005

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 service, addressing pollution complaints, environmental incidents and alleged non-compliance with 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, and targeted investigations to establish baseline conditions, track trends, and characterise environmental problems.

3. Strategic context

Pollution Control activities contribute to the following Take 10 targets:

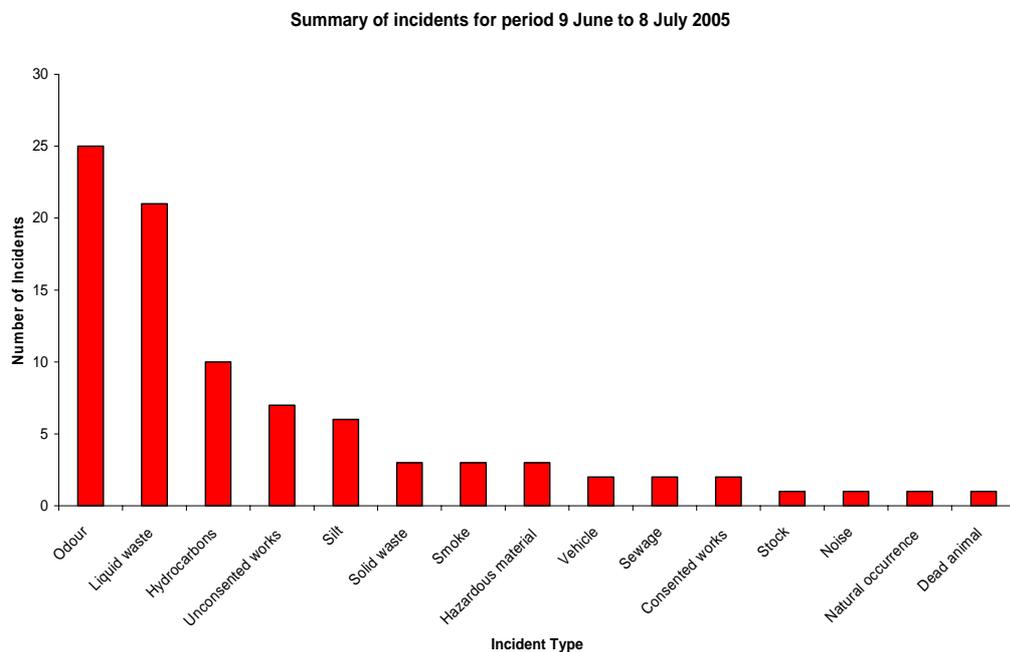
- reported incidents will be reduced by half of 2003 levels;
- 80% of businesses surveyed have waste reduction initiatives in place;
- the water quality of our five most polluted streams improves;
- there will be no significant deterioration of water quality in our key rivers and streams;
- there will be no overall deterioration in the health of our soils.

4. Incidents

4.1 Incident summary

A total of 89 incidents were recorded during this reporting period, as summarised in Figure 1. Further information about specific incidents is provided in Attachment 1.

Odour was again the predominant incident class, with a total of 25 incidents. The majority of odour incidents (48%) were for Carey's Gully, 12% for the Wainuiomata landfill and 8% for Imperial Tobacco. Investigations confirmed the likely source of odour at Wainuiomata landfill to be sulphidic waste from Exide Technologies. All of the complaints about Imperial Tobacco were from a single person, none of which were confirmed as offensive or objectionable.



The most significant incidents that occurred during this reporting period are summarised below:

- Contaminated stormwater discharging onto Houghton Bay beach was traced to a leachate discharge from the closed landfill site nearby. Wellington City Council manages the site, and is currently investigating options for diverting leachate into the sewer system.
- Odour complaints in the vicinity of Wainuiomata golf club led officers to review activities at the Wainuiomata landfill. Sampling confirmed heavy metals were discharging from the site in stormwater run-off. Hutt City Council arranged for prompt remediation of contaminated sediments, and discussions are underway to improve landfill management practices.
- Inadequate silt control at subdivision sites continues to affect streams throughout the western region. This issue is being dealt with through the Muddy Waters initiative, and draft resource materials have now been distributed to territorial authorities.

4.2 Response summary

The time between being notified of an incident and arriving on site (response time) is used as a performance indicator for the incident response service.

Table 1 shows that Officers did not achieve their target response time of 60 minutes for Red level incidents. This is due to two incidents where response was delayed due to low light conditions at the end of the day. If these two incidents are removed from the equation, the average response time falls to 38 minutes.

Table 1: Response time summary

| Target response time | Mean response time |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Red (60 minutes) | 97 minutes |
| Yellow (24 hours) | 6.9 hours |
| Blue (7 days) | 3.3 days |

5. Enforcement action

Table 2 summarises enforcement action taken during this reporting period.

Table 2: Summary of enforcement action

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Advisory Notices | 9 |
| Infringement Notices | 0 |
| Abatement Notices | 2 |
| Enforcement Orders | 0 |
| Prosecutions [information's laid] | 0 |

5.1 Infringement Notices

No infringement Notices were issued during this reporting period.

5.2 Abatement Notices

Abatement notices were served on the following:

- Exide Technologies Limited was abated to prevent stormwater contamination from contaminants leaving the company's battery recycling plant.

- A residential property owner in Upper Hutt has been required to remove several car bodies and associated contaminants buried beneath the rear garden of his property.

The Pollution Control Team is currently considering regulatory options for other environmental incidents that occurred during this reporting period.

5.3 Enforcement Orders

No Enforcement Orders have been sought during this reporting period.

6. Take Charge

Pollution Control Officers are continuing to work with businesses to identify and implement solutions to issues identified as part of their *Take Charge* assessments.

Sampling of sediment in Drain 6 and the Wharemauku Stream has been undertaken to establish the level of contamination, and the likely contribution from nearby industrial sites. This information will be used later to assess whether the 'health' of the streams improve as a consequence of our *Take Charge* initiative in the area.

7. Special projects

The Pollution Control Team was involved in the following special projects during this reporting period.

- A report was presented to the Hazardous Substance Technical Liaison Committee (HSTLC) for the Wellington region, describing a disturbing trend in hazardous substance incidents at the railyards and Interisland ferry terminal in recent years. The Occupational Safety & Health Service has subsequently initiated a project with organisations at the Port of Wellington to ensure that they have appropriate emergency response plans are in place.
- Top Shelf Productions is currently filming activities of Pollution Control Officers and other parts of the Council. This material will be presented in future episodes of the TV2 programme 'The Inspectors'.

8. Communication

No further public communication is necessary for this report.

9. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

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

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

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Attachment 1: Incident Response Summary