

Why the environment matters

The work you do can have an impact on the environment, especially rivers and streams. Concrete and cement related products are extremely toxic to waterway ecology.

It is everyone's responsibility to protect the environment, so it's there for our future generations to enjoy.



Why is clean stormwater important?

Stormwater (from roofs, roads, driveways and parks) is carried via gutters and drains into a network of underground pipes (stormwater system) and discharged untreated in to local streams and rivers.

Dirty and polluted water affects plant and life in waterways (insects, fish, eels and birds). It can also affect drinking water supplies and recreational users of water such as swimmers, kayakers, fishers and boaties.



Where can you get more information?

Environment Canterbury offers free advice through its Pollution Prevention Programme.

You can ask for advice during normal working hours and if you join the pollution prevention programme you could save time and money.

Visit our website, email or call us for further assistance on reducing your environmental risk.



<http://www.cleanwaterways.org.nz/>



<http://www.facebook.com/ChristchurchCleanWaterways>

Contact details:

Customer Services: 0800 324 636

ppg@ecan.govt.nz

www.ecan.govt.nz/ppg

Christchurch

58 Kilmore Street

PO Box 345

P. 03 365 3828

Timaru

75 Church Street

PO Box 550

P. 03 688 9069

Concrete Washwater

What you need to know



Everything is connected

What is concrete wash water?

Water that has come into contact with fresh cement or concrete dust and enters our rivers through roadside gutters and drains. Concrete wash water kills fish, eels and other life it comes into contact with.



More than 250 eels killed by concrete wash water after a discharge.

Diluting 1 litre of concrete wash water to a safe pH level would require around 100,000 litres of fresh water. Filtering also has no effect on the toxicity of concrete wash water.

Examples of cases where controls are necessary:

- Concrete cutting
- Water based dust control on demolition sites
- Wash down of completed driveways and walls
- Wash down of concrete trucks, pumps, wheelbarrows, and tools.



Help protect our waterways

What can I do to help control this problem on-site?

- Identify where concrete wash water will flow to and contain it. Make sure the wash water can't reach a gutter, drain, river or stream.
- Very small amounts of wash water (small fixes, cuts or repairs etc) can be diverted to bare ground, only if there is no chance of it reaching a gutter, drain, river or stream.

Options for managing concrete wash water

1. Before the concrete is poured, place a sheet of polythene across the length of the work area with one edge inside the framing to form a seal.
2. Use sand bags, lengths of wood or other material behind the polythene sheet across the base of the work area to form a sealed bund to collect all waste water and sediment (pictured).
3. Pump collected waste water into an IBC (pictured) or other large container using a small bilge with a cloth filter which can be powered using a car battery. Any sediment/solids can be collected and returned to the concrete supplier or other approved disposal facility.



4. Use the same polythene bund system to seal and contain waste water and use a sucker truck (vacuum tanker) to remove all collected waste.
5. Alternatively, seal & bund the work area (as above) and remove waste water using a wetvac, this is only suitable for very small amounts of waste water (finishing cuts or similar).
6. If no other option is available, very small amounts of run off or tool wash water can be diverted to a grassed area or soak pit, only if the area is not near any gutter, drain, river or stream.



Dispose of your waste correctly

Concreting and cutting is a trade, so its resulting waste is considered to be trade waste. It must be disposed of correctly.

You must have all waste removed by an authorised waste removal contractor.

If correct process is not followed financial penalties could be incurred.