

Incident response in the Lower Waitaki zone

The public play an important role in protecting our region's natural resources. Every year, we receive about 4,000 reports regionwide regarding incidents with potential to harm the quality of our air, land or water.

In the Lower Waitaki zone, we received 100 reports. The majority of these were related to discharges of air – many relating to outdoor burns and dust.

We respond to environmental incidents and consent breaches with a range of enforcement procedures, to remediate adverse effects, educate those responsible, and prevent similar incidents recurring.

Due to the high volume of reports, we respond to the most serious incidents first. If it involves a potentially serious environmental incident or offence, a Resource Management Officer will make a site visit. Our priority when responding is the safety of our officers, followed by minimising any adverse effect, and then investigating the incident.

Our staff call upon expertise from other technical staff (scientists, engineers), city and district council staff, and external consultants as the situation demands.

Breaching the Resource Management Act can amount to serious criminal offending. Our investigative practices are carried out to police standards, including conducting thorough scene examinations and evidence gathering.

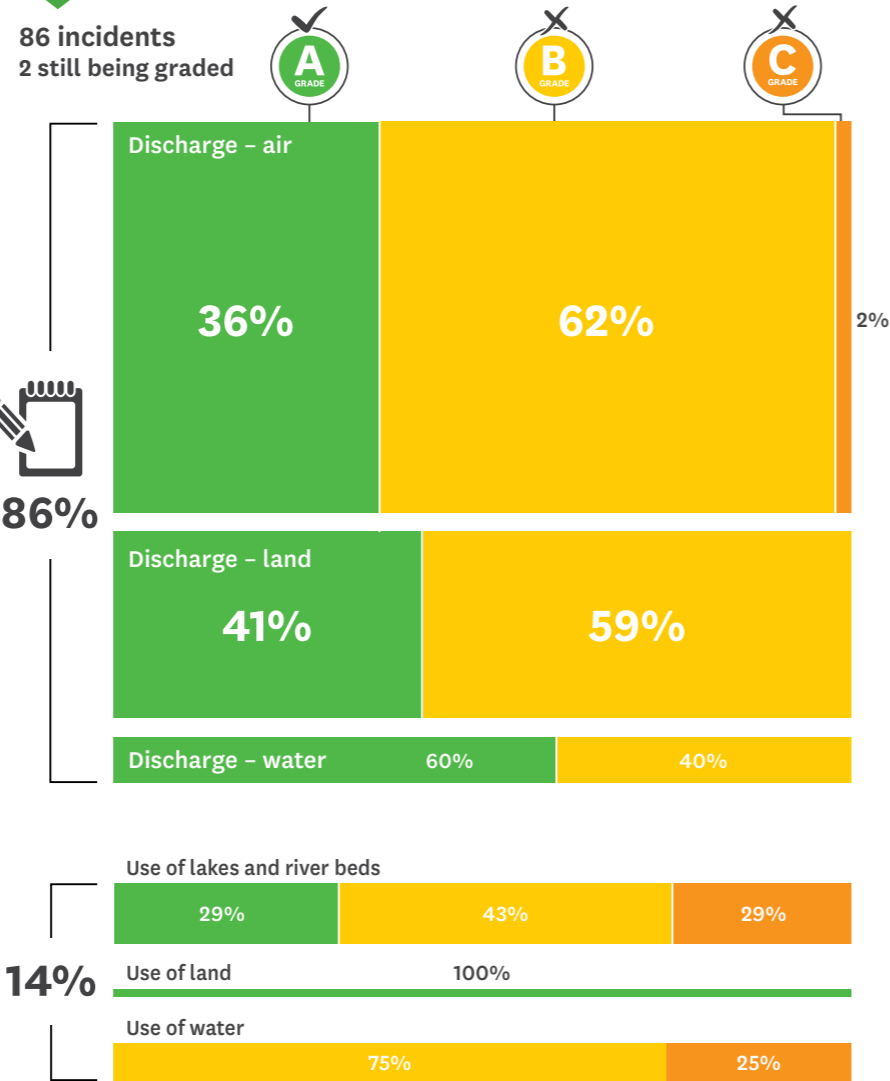
If you're concerned an activity may be damaging our environment, please call us on 0800 765 588 (24 hours) to report it, or use the Snap Send Solve app to report it from your mobile phone

*See over for grading explanation

90 incidents

What we found

86 incidents
2 still being graded

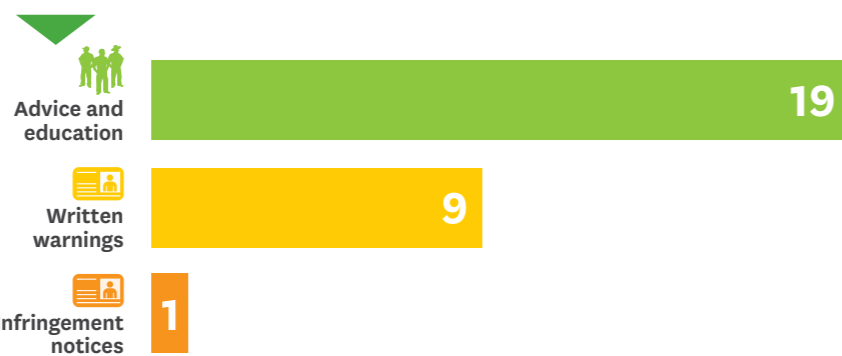


86%

14%

Due to rounding, percentages will not always add up to 100% exactly.

How we responded to reduce environmental damage



LOWER WAITAKI ZONE



Compliance monitoring and incident response 2019-20 SNAPSHOT REPORT

Protecting the environment is our top priority

In the last year, the zone team has:

- received 90 incident reports
- targeted 199 consents with a focus on water use,
- focused on high-risk consents, and
- provided advice to arable farmers about crop burning (see below).

Understanding crop residue burning

Crop residue burning (also known as stubble burning) is an important practice for arable farmers. However, the impacts of these burns can be far-reaching and can negatively impact people several kilometres away from where the burn is located.

We regularly receive calls to our incident response line with reports of 'out of control' fires and concerns about smoke, ash and visibility, common through the late summer.

Crop residue burning is a quick and economic way of dealing with crop residue which has less environmental impact than alternative methods. It is also an effective, non-chemical

means of weed management and can contribute to pest and disease control. However, in certain conditions and weather, the smoke from these burns can travel beyond the property boundary, causing a nuisance effect for those in nearby towns.

In the last year, several agencies – including us - have joined forces to provide more guidance and information to both those who undertake crop residue burning and those impacted by it, to address frequent misunderstandings about what is or is not acceptable.

- ▶ See inside for our consent compliance results.
- ◀ See the back for our incident response results.



Peter Burt
Zone Manager
Email: Peter.Burt@ecan.govt.nz
Phone: 03 387 7858

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Compliance monitoring

JULY 2019 – JUNE 2020 REPORT

Why this matters

We are working with land managers, individuals and industry to improve compliance to ensure the best long-term environmental results.

Consenting rules

- Resource consents allow people or organisations to do something that may have an effect on the environment, but this comes with conditions to protect the environment.
- It is important consent holders comply with their conditions otherwise they can have a negative impact on the environment.

What the grades mean



(Full compliance) Full compliance with all relevant consent conditions, plan rules, regulations and national environmental standards



(Low risk non-compliance) Compliance with most of the relevant consent conditions, plan rules, regulations and national environmental standards. Carries a low risk of adverse environmental effects.



(Moderate non-compliance) Non-compliance with some of the relevant consent conditions, plan rules, regulations and national environmental standards. Some environmental consequence.



(Significant non-compliance) Non-compliance with many of the relevant consent conditions, plan rules, regulations and national environmental standards. Significant environmental consequence.

How we respond to improve compliance grades

If there is an issue, our first response is to work with individuals and businesses to stop any immediate environmental damage.

We then investigate to determine what actions should be taken, including enforcement.



Education can achieve better outcomes and is valued by consent holders who need help. If education does not get the right results, there are a range of compliance actions as set out below:



Formal written warnings notify of an offence and require action to be taken.



Infringement notices, which include a fine, are issued for more significant breaches.



Abatement notices are a formal written direction, requiring certain actions to be taken or to cease within a specified time.

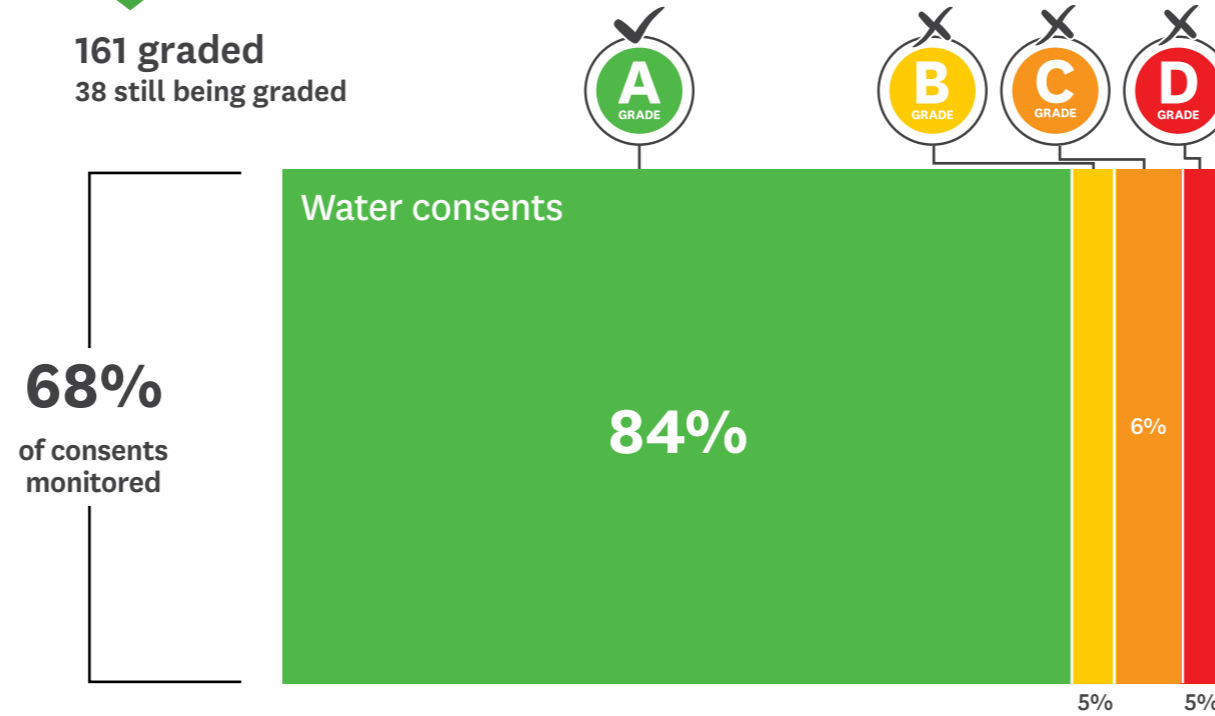


Prosecution is reserved for offences so serious that warrant court proceedings.

199 consents targeted

What we monitored

161 graded
38 still being graded

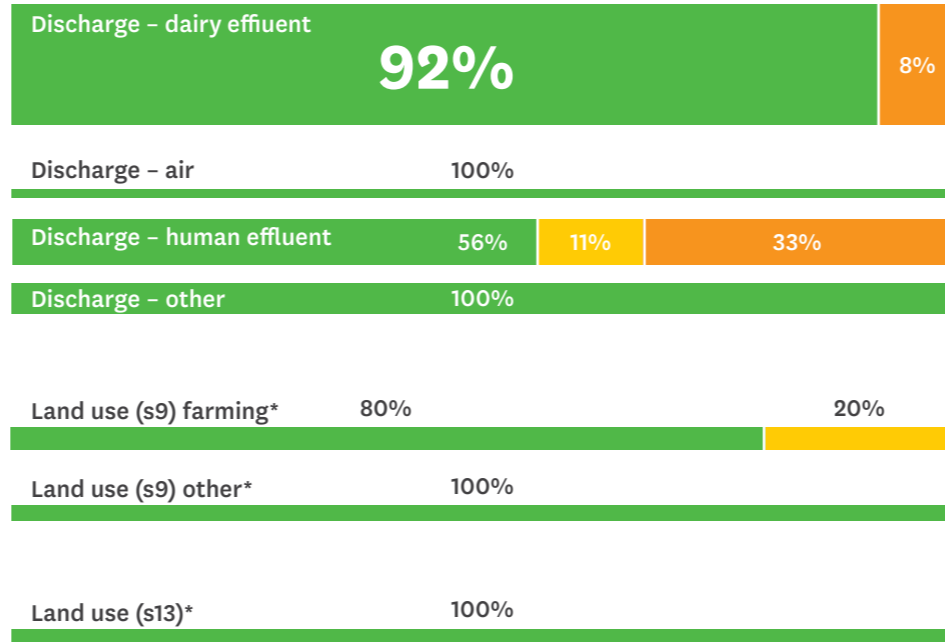


68%
of consents
monitored

25%

5%

2%



Due to rounding, percentages will not always add up to 100% exactly.

Note: Only data for completed monitored visits shown.

*Please refer to sections 9 & 13 of the land use section of the Resource Management Act.

How we responded to improve compliance grades



5,339 inspections by zone

Some consents have multiple inspections, these include those with a C or D compliance rating, as well as those identified as high-risk which are subject to more regular monitoring.

