

# Information sheet

## Coordinated waste solutions

### Managing waste in disaster recovery period

*This information sheet has been developed to provide guidance to Local Disaster Coordination Centres on waste management during disaster recoveries. It relates particularly to commercial and industrial waste but also contains information relevant to domestic and greenwaste.*

#### Background

The collection, transport and disposal of solid, liquid and hazardous waste is an essential consideration during a disaster, particularly during the recovery phase. Traditionally, local governments have had the responsibility of managing waste and clean-up operations post-disaster. Typically local governments manage this service professionally and to a high standard via the engagement of local waste contractors. We thank you for that.

In order to ensure a community recovers quickly and with resilience requires a focus on waste from businesses and industries as well as household and green waste. We know the waste industry has assets that, if used efficiently, can facilitate the management of commercial and industrial waste during recovery from a disaster. To assist all parties we provide the following information.

#### Waste solutions

##### 1. Required focus on commercial and industrial waste management needs

The waste streams from commercial and industrial facilities that are likely to require particular consideration following a disaster are:

- Organic waste. Food waste if not collected early will putrefy and result in public health risks and will become progressively harder to manage. Odour is also a major issue for community reports/complaints which can result in redirecting resources to deal with these complaints from the vital needs of cleaning up. Sources of such waste include supermarkets, poultry farms, food processing operations, abattoirs, meat and freezer stores, cold rooms and organic material stores.
- Liquid waste. A number of sources of liquid waste need to be considered during a disaster response these include, but are not limited to, petroleum waste particularly from petrol station sites and contaminated stormwater from electrical pits.
- Hazardous waste. Although probably already known and identified, the places where hazardous materials are manufactured, stored and disposed of require special attention and management to ensure they are not disposed of in normal waste streams.

Waste management planning carried out by Local Disaster Coordination Centres (LDCCs) need to consider how commercial and industrial waste will be collected, transported and disposed of. A large proportion of commercial and industrial waste will be regulated waste under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (EP Act). Regulated waste transport needs to be conducted under an environmental authority that is issued by our department, the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI). DESI can provide advice to the LDCC whether a particular operator has the appropriate approval for the waste to be transported.



## 2. Curb side recycling is inefficient

Waste management should aim to maximise the amount of material that is recycled. However, carrying out the segregation of waste into recyclables and non-recyclables at kerbside is inefficient. The waste industry is well placed to carry out waste recycling operations at centralised places (e.g. landfills and waste transfer stations) and this is the better and preferred option.

Where segregation of waste is beyond the capacity of a particular landfill operator, waste contractors and waste industry associations have the ability to perform a logistical function to source additional waste industry capacity.

Carrying out segregation at landfills and waste transfer stations may require a temporary relaxation or modification of environmental authority conditions. This is able to be accommodated with the use of a temporary emissions licence (TEL). TELs will be decided by DESI within 24 hours of application.

Further information on temporary emissions licences is available at [www.business.qld.gov.au](http://www.business.qld.gov.au) using 'temporary emissions licence' as the search term or in the guideline [Temporary emissions licence \(ESR/2015/1724\)](#). Application are to be made using the [Application for a temporary emissions licence \(ESR/2015/1727\)](#) form. The application fee for a temporary emissions licence is detailed in the information sheet [Fees for permits for environmentally relevant activities \(ESR/2015/1721\)](#).

## 3. Domestic waste can include hazardous waste

The types of domestic hazardous waste that are typically found following a natural disaster include:

- Asbestos from the demolition of houses.
- Chemical containers e.g. pesticide containers, paint tins.
- Other materials that look out of the ordinary compared to other materials being disposed of.

Strategies need to be developed to identify large volumes of hazardous waste at the initial collection point to ensure the safety of the community and contractors collecting the waste at both the waste collection and receiving ends of the process. Most types of hazardous waste are regulated waste and should only be transported under an environmental authority issued by DESI. DESI is able to provide advice to an LDCC whether a particular operator has the appropriate approval for the waste to be transported.

Information on the management of asbestos is available at [www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.au) using 'asbestos safety' as the search term. Information includes:

Various guides and fact sheets

<https://www.asbestos.qld.gov.au/resources/guidance>

Safe cleanup of storm damaged materials that may contain asbestos

<https://www.asbestos.qld.gov.au/resources/safe-work-procedures/safe-cleanup-storm-damaged-materials-may-contain-asbestos>

## 4. Coordination of waste industry assets

Waste contractors and waste industry associations can provide information about waste management and removal capacity and capabilities across the state. LDCCs can contact waste contractors and/or waste industry associations to perform a logistical function to source capabilities on an as needs basis.

## 5. Waste levy can be exempted

The *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011* provides that DESI may declare disaster management waste as a waste levy exempt waste. This declaration may be made when notified by a local government of a serious

local event or if a disaster is declared under the *Disaster Management Act 2003* (DM Act). The declaration may apply limits to the status of the disaster management waste. Examples of declared limits may include the period of time for which waste will be considered disaster management waste or that waste is disaster management waste only if disposed of at a specific facility.

Information on the waste disposal levy is available at [www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.au) using 'waste disposal levy' as the search term.

For enquiries relating to the waste disposal levy, please contact DESI at [wastelevyapps@des.qld.gov.au](mailto:wastelevyapps@des.qld.gov.au).

## 6. Temporary authority

An application can be made for a temporary authority to conduct an ERA under certain emergency situations. These situations include a disaster situation declared under the DM Act and several other events as prescribed in s316GA of the EP Act. A temporary authority can be granted for a maximum period of 4 months.

It is recommended that, in instances where time permits and prior to making an application, you have a pre-lodgement meeting with DESI to understand what information you need to provide with your application.

For more information on the range of emergency situations where a temporary authority would be appropriate, refer to the [temporary authority information sheet \(ESR/2023/6544\)](#). To apply for a temporary authority and for more information on the application requirements, refer to the [temporary authority application form \(ESR/2023/6428\)](#) or contact DESI by phoning 1300 130 372 (select option 4) or emailing [palm@des.qld.gov.au](mailto:palm@des.qld.gov.au).

## Enquiries

Pollution Hotline

Ph: 1300 130 372 (choose option 2)

Ph: 13 QGOV (13 74 68)

Email: [pollutionhotline@des.qld.gov.au](mailto:pollutionhotline@des.qld.gov.au)

## Version history

Version	Date	Version details
1.00	1 February 2013	Original document
2.00	20 February 2013	Minor amendments e.g. replacing "hazardous wastes" with "hazardous waste".
2.01	15 August 2016	Added version history and publication number (ESR/2015/1815). Updated corporate style.
3.00	25 September 2017	Web references and document publication numbers updated. The term 'approval' updated to 'environmental authority'.
3.01	15 June 2018	Document rebranded to align with machinery of government changes.
4.00	01 November 2019	Document updated to include details about waste disposal levy exempt waste.
5.00	18 November 2020	Updated links to asbestos guidelines and fact sheets in section 3. Updated to provide that LDCCs can contact waste contractors and/or waste industry associations to perform a logistical function; rather than a specific association.
6.00	06 May 2022	Document updated following the 2022 South East Queensland flood event.
7.00	28 June 2023	Section 6 (Temporary authority) added, plus other minor changes.
7.01	24 August 2023	Added reference to the temporary authority information sheet (ESR/2023/6544).
7.02	05 February 2024	Document rebranded to align with machinery of government changes.