

## *Safe Environmental Guidelines*

# Ready-mixed Concrete Driver Responsibilities for the On Site Management of Concrete Washwater

## Introduction



As our living environment becomes more heavily used we need to be aware of the correct methods that must be used when disposing of fresh concrete, or water contaminated with it.

Due to the significant risk of environmental damage caused by concrete-related activities, city, district and regional councils are increasingly committed to enforcing the Resource Management Act, 1991 (RMA) against all companies or persons who fail to manage their waste correctly.

Many councils are now taking an active role in issuing infringement notices. Any person or company found breaching the RMA may be liable for an infringement fee of up to \$1,000 or prosecution. Little if any leniency is being shown towards those infringing these regulations.



Ready mixed concrete companies have some clear responsibilities in ensuring that concrete delivered to site is used in an environmentally sound manner. When it is obvious to the driver that these safe practices are not being followed, action must be taken by the driver to avoid any legal consequences, even if the activities are being carried out by someone else.

The recommendations set out in this document form what the NZRMCA considers to be acceptable best practice for managing and disposing of fresh concrete or water contaminated with it. This document has been produced in partnership with the Auckland Regional Council who accept the various methods of wastewater control discussed here. The aim of this guideline is to stop the discharge of any cement slurry or wastewater from a site into the stormwater system and natural waterways.

## Examples of Cases Where Controls Are Necessary

- Washing down bowls, chutes, skips, concrete pump hoppers, conveyors
- Hosing away excess materials from chutes, skips, pumping operations.
- Concreting foundations or other holes that are full of water, where you know that the water will flow into drains or waterways.

## Simple On-site Guidelines

1. If you need to wash down your truck at a site ask where the designated area is for this operation.
2. Control the use of water when washing down, to minimise the amount of water to be disposed of.
3. Contain the washwater and slurry. Direct any runoff onto adjacent land for it to be safely absorbed, or into a pit. Ensure that temporary bunds are watertight and are monitored carefully.
4. Do not try to dilute the runoff and dispose of it to the stormwater system; this will make the problem worse.
5. Do not wash down on the road or anywhere where the contaminated water has a drainage path to waterways or stormwater drains
6. Securely blocked-off stormwater sumps can be used as a last resort to contain washwater and slurry. The water can then be disposed to unsealed ground or removed from site for appropriate disposal.
7. Ensure you clean up after yourself once the job has been completed.

***Remember: "Only rain goes down outside drains"***



**Prepared by the NZRMCA  
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