National wastewater environmental performance standards

- Provide clear expectations about the quality of wastewater treatment.
- Help protect the environment.
- Make the consenting process faster and more cost-effective.
- Improve transparency around how treatment plants are run.
- Support network owners to plan and fund infrastructure more effectively and efficiently.
- Enable appropriate compliance and enforcement actions.

Discharge to water standard

Sets treatment requirements for the main contaminants released from wastewater treatment plants into waterbodies.

Three steps to follow.

1. Identify the type of receiving waterbody the wastewater is discharged to.
2. Check the concentration limits for each contaminant and what monitoring and reporting is needed.
3. Include and implement the requirements in the resource consent conditions.

Contaminants covered by the standard include organic matter, Total Suspended Solids, Total Nitrogen and Phosphorus, ammonia, *E. coli* and enterococci.

The treatment requirements depend on how sensitive the receiving waterbody is and the level of environmental risk.

Small wastewater treatment plants that discharge to water have different discharge requirements.

There are very few exceptions permitted for discharges to water.

Discharge to land standard

Provides a framework to check if land is suitable for receiving treated wastewater and then sets discharge limits based on the specific risks at that site.

Three steps to follow.

1. Assess the site capability, including the environmental and public health risks, to classify the site.
2. Check the contaminant limits and what monitoring and reporting is needed.
3. Include and implement the requirements in the resource consent conditions.

Loading limits and treatment requirements are set for Total Phosphorus, Total Nitrogen and *E. coli*.

Minimum requirements for monitoring and reporting are set, based on expected environmental effects.

Discharges of wastewater to land must have a management plan and an operations and maintenance plan.

There are limited exceptions for discharges to land.

Reuse of biosolids standard

Ensures biosolids are appropriately treated so they can be safely reused and applied to land.

Four steps to follow.

1. Assess the stabilisation and contaminant grades of the biosolids.
2. Determine the activity status based on the grades to identify how and when biosolids can be reused or stored.
3. Check monitoring and reporting requirements – these align with the biosolids' grade.
4. Include and implement the requirements in the resource consent conditions.

Monitoring and reporting requirements reflect the grade of biosolid.

Where the standards apply, a biosolids application management plan must be developed and submitted to the relevant consenting authority.

Management of overflow and bypasses standard

The standard:

- creates a nationally consistent consenting pathway for overflows and bypasses, based on a risk assessment framework
- requires all existing overflow points and treatment plant bypasses to be mapped and consented
- standardises monitoring and reporting for overflows and bypasses from wastewater networks
- comes into force 19 December 2028.

Will build a clearer picture of local and national performance to support efforts to reduce the frequency and impact of overflows and bypasses.

The standards in practice

The standards help councils and communities make decisions about local wastewater arrangements. In practice, they will be used to provide the conditions of a consent when resource consents are granted.

Here's an example of what this may look like.

Network operator of wastewater plant requires renewal of resource consent for wastewater plant.

1. Network operator seeks input from community, including iwi and hapū, on preferred wastewater option (eg. discharge to land or water).
2. Network operator makes application to regional council (as the consenting authority) for preferred wastewater treatment option(s).
3. Regional council may choose to undertake further consultation with community, if needed.
4. Regional council approves and confirms resource consent conditions based on the standards or rejects resource consent application.
5. Network operator implements consent conditions, and monitors and reports on consent requirements to regional council.

Resource consents issued using the standards last **35** years.

Applicability

The standards apply to public networks, which are mostly owned and operated by local councils.

Wastewater matters not covered by the standards will follow the existing resource consent process.

Key dates

19 December 2025	19 December 2028
New consents must comply with the standards	Two-year time limit for plants operating on expired consent come into effect