

# Managing residual floodwaters on public or private land

Fact sheet | December 2022

Under the Environment Protection Act 2017, you have a General Environmental Duty (GED) to minimise harm to the environment and human health, so far as reasonably practicable.

## Step 1

### Assess the risk before deciding whether to pump residual water.

Always assess the risk to human health and the environment when deciding how to manage residual floodwater.

### Factors to help assess the level of risk

The level of risk depends on the nature and extent of any water contamination. It also depends on where you will deposit the water.

- Floodwaters from intensive agriculture pose a higher risk of harm.
- As floodwaters evaporate, the remaining water can have a higher concentration of contaminants. So, the longer residual waters remain, the poorer the quality is likely to be.
- If you plan to move your residual water into a waterway, consider the water users downstream.

If people are boating, swimming or fishing in the waterway (or if animals are drinking from it) consider alternatives. Alternatives include pumping flood water to grassed areas or, if possible, leaving the water to evaporate.

### Do not pump residual water into public lands if the water:

- looks contaminated or has an odour
- is likely to contain runoff from an urban environment
- is likely to contain runoff from intensive agriculture, stock feedlots, holding yards or dairy pond effluent
- has come into contact with dead livestock.

Your residual water may present a higher risk of harm. Contact the EPA for specific advice by calling 1300 372 842.

[epa.vic.gov.au](http://epa.vic.gov.au)

Environment Protection Authority Victoria  
GPO Box 4395, Melbourne VIC 3001  
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While water clarity can be an indicator of water quality, many pathogens are invisible to the eye. So, if in doubt, assume all floodwaters are contaminated.

## Step 2

Contact the receiving land or water manager for approval.

If you have determined that the risk of contamination is low, you should plan where to move your water.

If you want to pump onto public land or into a waterway, you will need approval from the relevant land or waterway manager. They might need a water test first.

If you intend to move your residual water onto, or across, private land, contact the landholder for their approval.

## Step 3

Monitor the pumping process and check the surrounding area.

When pumping begins, conduct a visual check of the water in the receiving environment. If there is a visible plume, reduce the pumping rate. Do not inhale any spray or mist.

You should stop pumping and contact the EPA for advice if:

- the receiving land or water becomes discoloured
- there are fish deaths
- there are any changes to the surrounding area

### Further information and help

If you have any questions or concerns about managing your residual floodwater, please call us on 1300 372 84 (24 hours) or visit [epa.vic.gov.au](http://epa.vic.gov.au).



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