

Class A recycled water – incident notification protocol



Publication 1959.1 July 2021
Replaces publication 1959

Factsheet

This publication is for Class A recycled water scheme managers. It explains when and how water corporations need to report incidents to EPA.

Introduction

As Victoria's environmental regulator, Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) has a key role in ensuring the management and proper use of Class A recycled water.

Class A (or fit-for-purpose) recycled water is produced from sewage/wastewater for specific reuse purposes. When properly managed, the use of Class A recycled water poses minimal risk to human health and the environment. However, human error, plant and equipment malfunction or unexpected events (such as severe weather or power failure) can lead to reduced water quality and therefore higher risk to human health and the environment. This publication outlines when and how Class A recycled water producers, scheme managers and users must report incidents to the EPA. [Victorian Guideline for Water Recycling](#) (publication 1910) provides detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of different agencies and water managers for Class A schemes.

When do I report an incident to EPA?

Incidents are classified as either 'actionable incidents' or 'reportable incidents'. Actionable incidents are serious incidents that need to be managed immediately to avoid or minimise potential risks to human health and the environment. Reportable incidents are generally less serious incidents that have not resulted in exposure to the community or the environment. EPA needs to be informed of both types of incidents.

How do I know if an incident is actionable or reportable?

Answer the questions below to determine if an incident is actionable or reportable.

1. Has the community been exposed to Class A recycled water beyond its intended reuse purposes?
2. Has Class A recycled water been discharged/disposed to the environment beyond its designed use?
3. Has the public been indirectly exposed to a product grown/manufactured with Class A recycled water?

If the answer is 'yes' to any of the first three questions, the incident is actionable

4. Has out of specification Class A recycled water been produced and entered the distribution network?
5. Have aspects of the Health and Environmental Management Plan (HEMP), the Recycled Water Quality Management Plan (RWQMP), and/or the User Site Management Plan (USMP) been breached (but no one has been exposed to Class A water beyond its intended use and answers to questions 1 to 3 must be 'No')
6. Have any of the monitoring results shown potential or real environmental impacts from the intended use of Class A water?

If the answer is 'yes' to any of questions 4, 5 or 6, the incident is reportable

What information do I need to give EPA?

When reporting an incident, you need to provide the answers to the six questions above. Additionally, you need to tell EPA:

- a. How many people have been exposed to Class A recycled water?
- b. How much Class A recycled water have people been exposed to through cross-connections,

Class A recycled water – incident notification protocol



- inappropriate use, inadequate controls, etc?
- What volume of Class A recycled water has been discharged to the environment over what period of time?
 - Has Class A recycled water been discharged to a waterway or sensitive environment?
 - Are there any downstream users to the waterway?
 - What volume of Class A recycled water has been produced?
 - What volume of out of specification Class A recycled water has entered the distribution network?

How do I report an incident?

Producers, scheme managers, and users of Class A recycled water need to follow the following steps for an actionable incident or a reportable incident.

The green steps indicate when you need to contact EPA. The orange steps are for when you need to contact your closest EPA regional office.

Actionable incident	Reportable incident
1. Awareness of incident	1. Awareness of incident
2. Arrange initial actions/mitigations	2. Arrange initial actions/mitigations
3. Immediately inform affected community/individuals	3. Inform any potentially affected parties
4. Notify EPA as soon as possible of an Actionable Incident	4. Notify EPA as soon as possible of a Reportable Incident
5. Scheme manager to coordinate actions with EPA regions	5. Inform EPA within one day of resolution of the incident
6. Provide updates regularly on the situation to EPA	6. Provide EPA with an Incident Report within the Annual Performance Statement (APS) for the period
7. Provide EPA with an Incident Report within agreed timeframe	

Note:

If the incident has put at risk a potable water supply system, Department of Health must also be informed Department of Health, phone: [1300 761 874](tel:1300761874) during business hours or [1300 790 733](tel:1300790733) after-hours.

Colour code showing primary contact points within EPA:

Call centre or web portal	Regional office
---------------------------	-----------------

How to contact EPA

Pollution hotline: [1300 372 842](tel:1300372842) (1300 EPA VIC)

Web portal: <http://portal.epa.vic.gov.au>
(you need a login to use the portal)

Email : contact@epa.vic.gov.au



For languages other than English, please call [131 450](tel:131450).
Visit epa.vic.gov.au/language-help for next steps.

If you need assistance because of a hearing or speech impairment, please visit relayservice.gov.au