

# TCC EMERGENCY (PROCEDURE) MANUAL

## 1.0 Response to Sewerage Spills



These procedures apply regardless of day of week or time of day.

### **Mission Statement:**

**Sewage Spills are not acceptable to the Townsville City Council or the Community. Staff will respond immediately to sewage spills and will do everything possible to close off the spill, contain the wastewater and prevent adverse effects on the environment.**

### **Priorities**

- 1 AVOIDANCE
- 2 IMMEDIATE ACTION
- 3 COMMUNICATION

### **Authority to Act**

The Foreperson in Charge Sewerage has the authority to initiate any actions necessary to cease the flow of sewerage spills, contain the wastewater, clean up the site and prevent environmental damage.

### **Response Procedure**

Upon advice being received that a sewerage spill has occurred, from whatever source, the following will be strictly adhered to:

- 1 The Manager Citiwater, if not already aware, is to be advised immediately;
- 2 At this point, the Manager Citiwater and Foreperson-in-Charge Sewerage, are to be aware of the situation;

**N.B. The following hierarchy is to be adhered to:**

**Manager Citiwater;  
Engineer Sewerage;  
Foreperson-in-Charge Sewerage;  
Foreperson on call (in after hours situations);**

The foreman on call, in cases after hours, is to ensure that the above officers are aware of the situation.

- 3 The Foreman-in-Charge is to be responsible for organising staff to attend to the problem immediately. Priority is to be given to stopping the flow

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of the sewage spill, containing the spill and protecting the surrounding environment.

4 The Manager Citiwater is to immediately notify the following:

- Mayor;
- Chief Executive Officer;
- Director Engineering Services;
- Director Environmental Services;
- Public Relations Manager;
- Chairperson– Engineering Services Committee;

The Director Environmental Services is to notify the Manager Health Services. The Manager Citiwater will then notify the Environmental Protection Agency after consultation with the above in point 4.

5 Foreperson in Charge Sewerage, in the meantime is to provide advice and support to the Forepersons supervising work and any persons involved in rectifying plant and cleansing surroundings;

6 Foreperson in Charge Sewerage will at all times keep the Manager Citiwater informed of all progress;

7 Manager Citiwater is to keep the Chief Executive Officer, Director Environmental Services, Public Relations Manager, Chairperson Engineering Services Committee and the Mayor advised of any new developments;

8 At such time as the Sewerage Spill has been stopped and contained whenever possible, the Foreman-in-Charge and the Manager Citiwater will discuss procedures for retrieving the wastewater to be put back through the system. Only in cases where the wastewater is unable to be retrieved, may the wastewater be treated in-situ and discharged to the environment.

9 The Foreman-in-Charge is to immediately prepare a report to the Manager Citiwater regarding the circumstances surrounding the spill. At this time, in the case of a spill occurring in the vicinity of recreational swimming areas, the Foreman-in-Charge will direct staff to erect temporary signs (held by Engineering Services) indicating that the recreational area for swimming is polluted and advising the community that no swimming is permitted.

10 The Manager Citiwater is to contact the Manager Health Services at the first available opportunity after the immediate threat of sewerage spills into the environment have been placed under control or abated. If the Foreperson in Charge Sewerage believes an environmental assessment needs to be conducted due to evidence of fish kills or the threat of impending environmental damage, then they are to contact the Manager Environmental Management Services immediately also. The Manager Health Services will notify community or sporting groups listed in Section A 4.0 of the spill.

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11 The Manager Health Services is to arrange for staff to immediately sample the receiving water body for the wastewater if the receiving body is defined as recreational water's and is under the jurisdiction or accepted responsibility of the Townsville City Council (eg Strand Bathing Reserve, Lakes 1 or 2). At the same time, the Engineer Sewerage will contact a staff member of the Citiwater Laboratory and arrange for immediate analysis of the sample.

12 Staff of the Citiwater Laboratory are to advise the Manager Health Services, by telephone, e-mail and facsimile, of the results as soon as they are available.

13 The Manager Citiwater is to be kept informed of all developments and will notify all that those with responsibilities already outlined. The Manager Public Relations is to liaise with elected representatives, Director Engineering and the Director Environmental Service regarding any press releases surrounding the spill.

14 The Manager Health Services or a delegated staff member, is to immediately prepare a report on the findings of the analytical data. These findings will also be made available to the sporting groups notified in Item 10. The Manager Public Relations is to receive a copy of this immediately, or alternatively receive verbal advice or point form of the findings. The Manager Health Services will then take over responsibility for the maintenance of signs warning the public and will take the appropriate decision as to whether the signs remain in place or are removed.

15 The Manager Citiwater, Manager Health Services and Foreperson in Charge Sewerage are to meet for a debrief immediately after the above has been completed, to combine reports, to discuss the situation and put forward any recommendations to prevent a spill from happening again. The Director's of Engineering and Environmental Services are to receive a copy of all reports and discuss remediation measures with the Chief Executive Officer.

16 The Manager Public Relations is to monitor the press for adverse publicity and will initiate any reports to the press.

17 The Manager Citiwater is to forward all necessary reports to the Environmental Protection Agency. The Manager Citiwater will provide feedback to the staff involved in the spill regarding any decisions made at the meeting mentioned in Paragraph 15. The Manager Citiwater will initiate any reforms to procedures, training or disciplinary action to prevent the same from happening again.