



Guideline

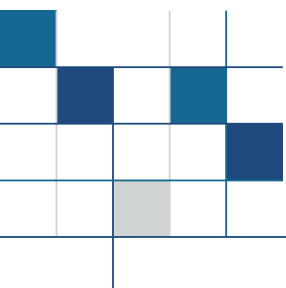
Category 54 Sewage facility premises: Standardised Approvals Pathway

Activities regulated under the:

- *Environmental Protection Act 1986*
- *Environmental Protection Regulations 1987*

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1. Purpose

This guideline (the Guideline) outlines the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's (the Department) Standardised Approvals Pathway (SAP) for Category 54 – Sewage facility premises under Schedule 1 to the *Environmental Protection Regulations 1987* (EP Regulations).

This pathway provides a standardised assessment process for certain prescribed premises categories under Part V, Division 3 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act) that meet defined eligibility criteria and present a low risk to human and environmental receptors.

The Guideline outlines:

- the eligibility criteria for this category's Standardised Approvals Pathway;
- the information required to establish eligibility for this Standardised Approvals Pathway;
- the risk assessment conducted for this category's Standardised Approval; and
- the regulatory controls applied to this category's Standardised Approval for works approvals and licences.

2. Scope

The Guideline applies to works approval and licence applications for sewage facility premises as prescribed under Category 54 of Schedule 1 to the EP Regulations that meet specific eligibility criteria outlined in Section 6 of the Guideline.

It does not apply to:

- Category 54 applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria; or
- applications for other categories listed under Schedule 1 to the EP Regulations.

Specific guidance is available for other prescribed premises categories that have a Standardised Approvals Pathway. See the Department's [Standardised Approvals Pathway](#) page for further information.

Where the Standardised Approvals Pathway is not available for a prescribed premises category, the general assessment pathway must be used. See the Department's [Licence and works approval applications](#) page for further information on how these applications are processed.

3. Context

Guidelines provide direction on how the Department interprets and applies the legislation it administers.

Guidelines are not mandatory considerations. Their purpose is to assist applicants to provide information in the best possible manner to ensure the efficient assessment of applications. Applications that do not align with the appropriate guidelines may result in protracted assessment timeframes and, if the information provided is not sufficient

for the Department to complete an assessment, the application may be declined or refused.

The Guideline should be read in conjunction with other relevant Department policies, guidelines and procedures available on the Department's website (see *Related documents* section for links), in particular the following:

- *Guideline: Industry Regulation Guide to Licensing* – outlines the legal requirements for occupiers of prescribed premises under the EP Act.
- *Guideline: Risk assessments* – outlines the Department's risk-based approach to assessing Part V applications.
- *Procedure: Prescribed premises works approvals and licences* – details the stages of assessment and timeframes for Part V applications.

4. Legislation

In completing the risk assessment for this category, the Department has applied its regulatory framework and relevant policy documents that are available on the Department's website at [DWER Regulatory documents | Western Australian Government](#).

Works approval and licence holders remain bound by the provisions of existing written laws, including the EP Act and its subsidiary regulations. In relation to Category 54, the following legislation is of particular relevance:

- *Environmental Protection Regulations 1987*
- *Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997*
- *Environmental Protection (Controlled Waste) Regulations 2004*
- *Contaminated Sites Act 2003*
- *Contaminated Sites Regulations 2006*
- *Environmental Protection (Unauthorised Discharges) Regulations 2004*
- *Environmental Protection (Environmentally Sensitive Areas) Notice 2005*.

5. Risk assessment

Risk assessments for this category's Standardised Approval works approval and licence have been completed, in accordance with the Department's regulatory framework and [Guideline: Risk Assessments](#).

The Standardised Approvals Pathway uses activity criteria and siting criteria to minimise or eliminate the likelihood and consequence of a risk event occurring. The activity criteria influence the source, type and quantity of emissions and/or discharges from an activity. The siting criteria ensure that sensitive receptors are located at a distance far enough away from the source of the emissions and/or discharges that the risk of these emissions and/or discharges is minimised or eliminated.

Regulatory controls further mitigate any potential risks that may not have been adequately addressed through applying the activity and siting criteria. These controls include proportionate works approval and licence conditions and may include conditions designed to convert the eligibility criteria into legal requirements. Regulatory controls are determined and applied in accordance with the Department's [Guidance Statement: Setting Conditions](#). In addition, works approval and licence holders remain bound by the provisions of other written laws, including the EP Act and its subsidiary regulations.

The risk assessments completed for this category's Standardised Approval works approval and licence are detailed in their respective decision statements (Appendix B and Appendix D). The regulatory controls that have been applied are included in the Standardised Approvals works approval and licence (Appendix C and Appendix E).

6. Eligibility criteria

This Standardised Approvals Pathway applies to applications to construct and/or operate:

- premises¹ on which sewage is treated (excluding septic tanks); or
- from which treated sewage is discharged onto land; and
- that meet both the activity and siting criteria outlined below.

6.1 Activity criteria

The activity criteria for this category's Standardised Approval were developed to target sewage facilities on new or established mine sites.

The proposed activity must meet the criteria specified in Table 1.

Table 1: Activity criteria

Factor	Criteria
Facility location	The sewage facility must be located on a mine site.
Authorised design capacity	Sewage treatment less than 500 m ³ per day.
Authorised process types	Sewage is treated, with the treated wastewater discharged on land via irrigation. Sewage treatment is limited to 'package-type' wastewater treatment plants (WWTP) generally comprising pre-assembled, self-contained systems designed to treat wastewater, typically for mining accommodation camps or for other project construction camps.

A Standardised Approval works approval/licence does not provide any authorisation for the clearing of native vegetation. The clearing of native vegetation requires a clearing permit under the EP Act, unless an exemption applies.

¹ Premises means residential, industrial or other premises of any kind whatsoever and includes land, water and equipment (s. 3(1) EP Act).

6.2 Location and size of wastewater irrigation size

The proposed activity must demonstrate that the wastewater irrigation area complies with the relevant *Mine Wastewater Irrigation* (Appendix F) requirements.

6.3 Siting criteria

The siting criteria for this category's Standardised Approval were developed to ensure there are sufficient separation distances between the activity and sensitive receptors. These distances were derived from:

- [Separation Distances between Industrial and Sensitive Land Uses \(GS 3\) | EPA Western Australia](#); and
- other relevant guidelines published by the Department.

The proposed activity must meet all the siting criteria specified in Tables 2, 3 and 4 below.

How to measure separation distance:

Separation distances are measured from the 'activity boundary' within the prescribed premises boundary, rather than the premises boundary itself. The [Guideline - Odour emissions](#) provides guidance on how to establish an activity boundary.

The [Standardised Approvals Pathway geographic information system \(GIS\) tool](#) has been developed to assist applicants in undertaking proximity analysis to assess whether the location of the proposed activity meets the applicable siting criteria.

Human receptors:

Land uses considered to be potentially sensitive to emissions from industry and infrastructure include residential developments, hospitals, hotels, motels, hostels, caravan parks, schools, nursing homes, childcare facilities, shopping centres, playgrounds, and some public buildings. Some commercial, institutional and industrial land uses which require high levels of amenity or are sensitive to particular emissions may also be considered "sensitive land uses". Examples include some retail outlets, offices and training centres, and some types of storage and manufacturing facilities.

Table 2: Siting criteria – Human receptors

Human Receptors		
Potential receptor and considerations	Criteria	Reference ²
Land uses	The activity must comply with Local Government Authorities planning approvals and land use zoning under the Planning and Development Act 2005 , and associated regulations and policies.	Planning and Development Act 2005
Human receptors – non-industrial land uses	Activities must not be located within 500 m	Visual inspection
Registered Aboriginal sites as defined in the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972	Activities must not be carried out within 50 m of the specified area	DPLH-099
Lodged Aboriginal heritage places recorded in the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Inquiry System (ACHIS)		DPLH-100

Environmental receptors:

There are potential receptors in the surrounding environment, which may include areas of high conservation value and special significance (specified ecosystems). These ecosystems may be affected by emissions and discharges from prescribed premises.

Table 3: Siting criteria – Environmental receptors

Environmental Receptors		
Potential receptor and considerations	Criteria	Reference
Ramsar Wetlands	Activities must not be located within 500 m	DBCA-010
Important Wetlands in Western Australia		DBCA-045
South Coast Significant Wetlands		DBCA-018

² Unless stated otherwise, listed datasets may be accessed via the Data WA website (Data WA). Note that some datasets listed are managed by other government departments or agencies. All datasets change over time; applicants should ensure that they are always referring to the most up to date information.

Geomorphic Wetlands – Swan Coastal Plain <i>[Management category: “Conservation” and “Resource enhancement” only]</i>		DBCA-019
Geomorphic Wetlands Cervantes South Geomorphic Wetlands Cervantes Coastal Geomorphic Wetlands Cervantes Eneabba Geomorphic Wetlands Darkan Duranillin Geomorphic Wetlands Augusta to Walpole	Activities must not be located within 500 m	DBCA-013 DBCA-014 DBCA-015 DBCA-016 DBCA-017
Geomorphic Wetlands South West Walpole Wilderness Peat Wetlands Geomorphic Wetlands Leeuwin Naturaliste Ridge and Donnybrook to Nannup Geomorphic Wetlands Manjimup to Northcliffe		DBCA-040 DBCA-042 DBCA-043 DBCA-044
Surface waters (i.e. major and minor drainage lines, salt lakes, lakes, other wetlands)	Activities must not be located within 200 m	DWER-031
1 in 100-year flood way or flood fringe	Activities must not be carried out within the specified area	DWER-014 or DWER-015
Other Environmentally Sensitive Areas, as listed in the Environmental Protection (Environmentally Sensitive Areas) Notice 2005		DWER-046
Public Drinking Water Source Areas proclaimed under the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act 1909 or the Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947		DWER-033
Priority Ecological Communities	Activities must not be located within 100 m	Priority Ecological Communities list
State managed parks (lands and waters)		DBCA-011

Western Swamp Tortoise Habitat	Activities must not be located within 500 m	Western Swamp Tortoise Habitat
Peel Inlet – Harvey Estuary		Peel Inlet – Harvey Estuary
Limestone (karst) or calcrete aquifers		Geological mapping
Portable/Stock use bores and dams	Activities must not be located within 500 m	Water Register
Annual average maximum groundwater level (metres below natural soil surface) ³	Activities must have a minimum of 3 m vertical separation from highest seasonal groundwater level	Perth Groundwater Map (Perth metro area)
Acid Sulfate Soil Risk Map, Swan Coastal Plain Acid Sulfate Soil Risk Map, Estuaries Acid Sulfate Soil Risk Map, Pilbara Coastline Acid Sulfate Soil Risk Map, Albany-Torbay Acid Sulfate Soil Risk Map, Geraldton Acid Sulfate Soil Risk Map, Lower South West	Activities must not be carried out within the specified area	DWER-055 DWER-050 DWER-053 DWER-054 DWER-051 DWER-052

Other considerations:

Table 4: Siting criteria – Other considerations

Other Considerations		
Potential receptor and considerations	Criteria	Reference
A site listed on the Contaminated Sites Database maintained under the Contaminated Sites Act 2003 .	Activities must not be carried out within the specified area	DWER-059

³ Examples include well construction logs, borehole logging (including soil samples), and groundwater level monitoring (including standing groundwater levels). Where the Perth Groundwater Map is not applicable to a mining premise, site-specific information or equivalent mapping, including these examples, should be used to demonstrate that the siting requirements have been met.

7. Self-assessment and information requirements

Before applying for a Standardised Approval for this category, applicants must complete a *Category 54 Standardised Approval Eligibility Checklist* (Appendix A) to confirm they are eligible for the Standardised Approvals Pathway. This form outlines the information that the Department requires to confirm eligibility.

The completed checklist and supporting information must accompany the application form when applying for a Standardised Approval. The supporting information must be sufficient to allow the Department to make a reasonable decision.

8. Other approvals

Applicants are responsible for identifying and obtaining all other required approvals, permits and authorisations, and for implementing any necessary management measures (for example, Local Government approvals and/or Department of Health approvals).

9. Consultation

In accordance with sections 54(2a) and 57(2a) of the EP Act, applications that have been accepted and found eligible for the Standardised Approvals Pathway are advertised on the Department's website. The works approval application is advertised for 14 calendar days. The licence application is advertised for 7 calendar days. This timeframe may vary on a case-by-case basis. The advertising period will be specified on the advert.

In accordance with sections 54(2)(b) and 57(2)(b) of the EP Act, if an application for a works approval or licence is received by the Department and that application complies with section 54 or section 57 (as applicable), the CEO of the Department must seek comments on that application from any public authority or person having a direct interest in the subject matter of that application.

The Department will consider all comments received when determining whether to grant a Standardised Approval works approval or licence. The Department may direct the application to the general assessment pathway where information becomes available that indicates the Standardised Approvals Pathway is no longer appropriate for the application. Where an application is directed to the general assessment pathway, the application will be assessed in accordance with the processes and timeframes applicable to that pathway. Any timeframes associated with the Standardised Approvals Pathway will no longer apply.

Once the Department determines to grant a Standardised Approval works approval or licence, a copy of the granted instrument will be published on the Department's website.

The appeal provisions in section 102 of the EP Act apply to all Standardised Approval decisions.

10. Approvals documents

A Standardised Approval is granted based on:

- information available at the time of the decision
- the assessment of risk informed by the eligibility criteria that include requirements on activity type, production capacity and siting
- the declaration made by the applicant in their application that they meet the eligibility criteria and will comply with the conditions of the Standardised Approval.

The Department will seek to ensure the Standardised Approval risk assessment and associated documents remain fit for purpose. The Department will take action where:

- new information relevant to the decision-making process becomes available
- information submitted within an application and/or compliance documents are found to be false or misleading
- the approval holder is found not to comply with the conditions of the Standardised Approval works approval or licence.

If the Department determines to grant a Standardised Approval, the relevant Standardised Approval instrument and associated decision statement will be issued.

Templates of these documents include:

- Category 54 Standardised Approval works approval - Decision statement (Appendix B)
- Category 54 Standardised Approval works approval (Appendix C)
- Category 54 Standardised Approval licence - Decision statement (Appendix D)
- Category 54 Standardised Approval licence (Appendix E).

Document implementation

The Guideline comes into effect on the day it is published. Applications received after publication will be assessed in accordance with the information contained herein.

Related documents

Document title / Link
Guideline: Industry Regulation Guide to Licensing
Guideline: Risk Assessment
Procedure: Prescribed premises works approvals and licences
Separation Distances between Industrial and Sensitive Land Uses (EPA 2005)
Guideline - Odour emissions
Guideline – Setting Conditions
Environmental Protection Regulations 1987
Environmental Protection (Noise Regulations) 1997
Environmental Protection (Controlled Waste) Regulations 2004
Contaminated Sites Act 2003
Contaminated Sites Regulations 2006
Environmental Protection (Unauthorised Discharges) Regulations 2004
Environmental Protection (Environmentally Sensitive Areas) Notice 2005

Custodian and review

The currency of this document will be continuously evaluated, and the document will be updated as required.

Document details

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Current version	Version 1.0, August 2026
Previous versions	-
Corporate file number	DWERDT1347706

Glossary

Term	Definition
annual period	means a 12 month period commencing from [day month] until [day month] of the immediately following year.
CEO	means Chief Executive Officer. “submit to / notify the CEO” (or similar), means: Director General Department administering the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> Locked Bag 10 Joondalup DC WA 6919 info@dwer.wa.gov.au
condition	means a restriction or limitation as stated and applied under a works approvals or licence.
Department; DWER	means the Department established under section 35 of the <i>Public Sector Management Act 1994</i> and designated as responsible for the administration of the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> .
discharge	has the same meaning given to that term under section 3(1) of the EP Act.
eligibility criteria	means the activity and siting criteria, the applicant must demonstrate they meet to qualify for assessment under the Standardised Approvals Pathway.
emission	has the same meaning given to that term under section 3(1) of the EP Act.
EP Act	means the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> (WA).
EP Regulations	means the <i>Environmental Protection Regulations 1987</i> (WA).
instrument	means works approval, licence or registration for prescribed premises.
licence	means a licence granted and in force under Part V Division 3 of the EP Act.
m	means metres
mine site	means a premises that is a ‘mine’ according to the definition of mine read with the definition of mining operations in section 8(1) of the <i>Mining Act 1978</i> .
prescribed premises	has the same meaning given to that term under the EP Act, being the premises specified in Schedule 1 to the EP Regulations.
sewage	has the same meaning given to the term sewage under regulation 2 of the <i>Environmental Protection (Controlled Waste) Regulations 2004</i>

Standardised Approval	means this pathway provides a standardised assessment process for certain prescribed premises categories that meet defined eligibility criteria and present a low risk to human and environmental receptors.
works approval	means a works approval granted and in force under Part V Division 3.
WWTP	means wastewater treatment plant.

Appendix A: Category 54 Standardised Approval - Eligibility Checklist

[SAP-IR-F-54 - Eligibility Checklist.docx](#)

Appendix B: Category 54 Standardised Approval works approval - Decision statement

[SAP-IR-WDS-54 - Works Approval Decision Statement.docx](#)

Appendix C: Category 54 Standardised Approval works approval template

[SAP-IR-WI-54 - Works Approval Instrument.docx](#)

Appendix D: Category 54 Standardised Approval licence - Decision statement

[SAP-IR-LDS-54 - Licence Decision Statement.docx](#)

Appendix E: Category 54 Standardised Approval licence template

[SAP-IR-LI-54 - Licence Instrument.docx](#)

Appendix F: Mine Wastewater Irrigation

Finding a suitable location

Select land for wastewater irrigation with a suitable slope and low risk of erosion. Avoid land that is subject to seasonal flooding, waterlogging, contains acid sulfate soils, needs to be artificially drained, or requires waterways to be redirected.

Wastewater should not be disposed of to salt lakes or clay pans. If there are rock outcrops on the site, the area required for wastewater irrigation will need to be increased accordingly.

The site should have a slope of no more than 10 % (a fall of 1 m for every 10 m distance). The slope should be measured in the field with a clinometer.

How to calculate the land area required

A significant physical constraint for siting a wastewater irrigation scheme is ensuring that the selected area of land is sufficiently large to allow water and its dissolved constituents to be taken up by vegetation or retained within the soil profile without excessive seepage into groundwater.

The area required to meet this condition will depend on the volume and quality of wastewater produced, soil conditions, and local climatic factors at the site. However, as a first approximation, the area of land required for irrigating a given production rate of wastewater is given by the following equation (US EPA, 2006):

$$A = (3.65 \times Q) / (L \times T_{app})$$

Where: A = land area (hectares)
 Q = flow rate of wastewater (m³/day)
 L = wastewater hydraulic loading to soil (cm/week)
 T_{app} = period of wastewater application each year (weeks)

In the absence of site-specific information about soil properties, the loading rate in the above equation can be assumed to be about **4 cm/week** for irrigating turf, and about **2.5 cm/week** for irrigating tree plantations (US EPA, 2006). These values assume that the wastewater salinity is sufficiently low to be suitable for irrigation without harming the irrigated vegetation or adversely affecting the underlying groundwater salinity. For remote mine sites irrigating to native vegetation the lower figure of **2.5 cm/week** should be used for maximum irrigation rate.

For most mining areas outside the South West region, the pan evaporation rate exceeds rainfall throughout the year. That is, T_{app} can be assumed to be 52 weeks for most mine sites.

References

US EPA, 2006. Process design manual, land treatment of municipal wastewater

effluents. *Report EPA/625/R-06/016*. Report available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264300380_Process_Design_Manual_Land_Treatment_of_Municipal_Wastewater_Effluents.