

Waste is any material – solid, liquid or gas – that is unwanted and disposed of by its owner. Hazardous waste has one or more properties that make it harmful to the environment and/or people.

The Regional Council offers a service to Northland ratepayers to collect, store and dispose of hazardous waste substances from all around the region. Council staff also monitor contaminated sites and closed and operational landfills in the region, to check that they are not having a negative effect on the environment. The Council also works with industry and the local community to try and reduce the amount of waste produced in the region.



Regional Council staff sorting hazardous waste.

Waste hazardous substances

Collection and operational depots

The Council, in conjunction with PGG Wrightson Ltd., operates four collection depots in Northland for unused waste hazardous substances. To find out more about these facilities, go to www.nrc.govt.nz/agrichemicalcollection

The Council also operates a mobile collection service for the collection of chemicals that may be leaking or in broken containers, from individual properties. To learn more about how to properly dispose of household hazardous waste, and to see whether you qualify for the free service, go to www.nrc.govt.nz/homehazwaste

Once collected, the waste is transported to the Council's facility at Re:Sort transfer station in Whāngārei, where it is repackaged, labelled and placed in temporary storage before being despatched to Auckland for disposal. The collection programme allows people to dispose of waste hazardous substances responsibly, at no extra cost, rather than dumping them in the natural environment.

Waste Management performance targets

To reduce the quantities of hazardous substances and hazardous wastes entering Northland's environment and minimise the adverse effects of these by:

- Facilitating the safe handling and lawful storage of hazardous substances and management of waste hazardous substances.
- Operate facilities throughout Northland for storage of hazardous substances and have facilities open 100% of working hours.
- 100% of hazardous substances are collected, transported and disposed of within 18 months.
- 80 hours a month spent undertaking workplace inspections and reporting to the Department of Labour.
- Provide a 24 hour phone service for hazardous substance incidents and maintain a 100% response rate to calls received.
- Maintain a database of potentially contaminated sites and provide to relevant district councils by 31 December each year.



Unwanted chemicals and containers in PGG Wrightson's chemshed at Waipapa.

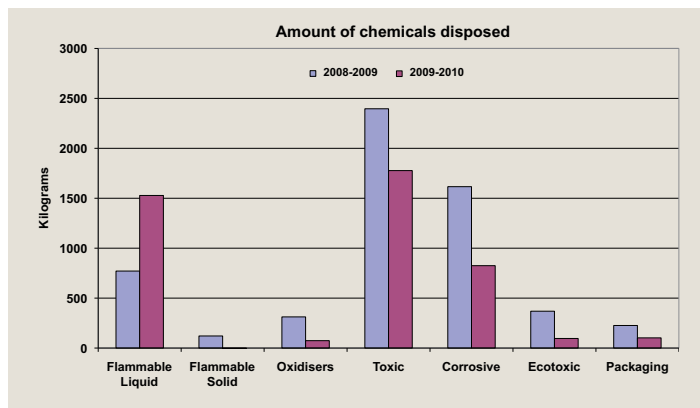
Waste Management

Waste hazardous substances collected

The hazardous waste that Council staff collects must be disposed of. Some of the waste can be treated or stored in New Zealand, but there are some products that must be treated overseas, mainly in Europe, in very sophisticated plants that destroy the waste in a manner that ensures they cannot cause environmental damage.

The total amount of hazardous waste collected in 2009-2010 was 4401kg. Of this, 732.4kg was exported, 180.4kg of this being persistent organic pollutants, which do not readily break down in the environment, and include DDT, Dieldrin and pentachlorophenol (PCP).

The chart shows the various categories of chemicals disposed of, as classified by their hazards. This excludes a significant volume, estimated at approximately a tonne of plastic agrichemical containers which were disposed of. The packaging referred to reflects the weight of steel drums that the waste must be packed into to meet the requirements of the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act.



Workplace inspections and emergency response

The Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act, 1996 (1996 No.30) is the basis for how hazardous substances must be managed, and covers all aspects of the lifecycle of a hazardous substance, from raw material through manufacture, storage and use, and the disposal of hazardous waste.

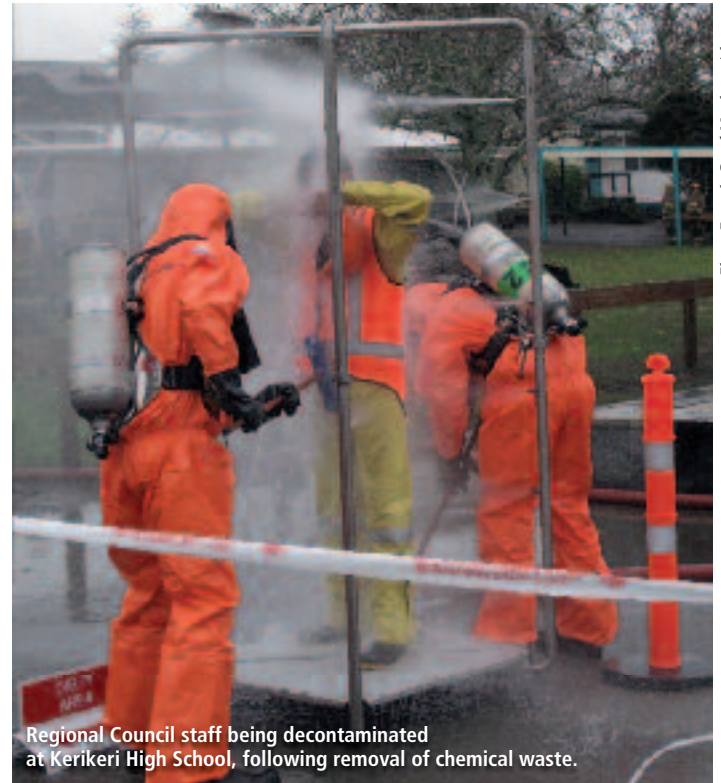


Photo: Peter de Graaf, Northern Advocate.



The Regional Council is contracted to audit workplaces throughout Northland for compliance with this legislation, on behalf of the Department of Labour. This service has seen inspections in more than 170 sites by the Council's group of six warranted HSNO Enforcement Officers, in the past year, with over 70 follow-up visits. Sites vary greatly in their level of compliance, but those that have been visited show a high level of compliance once they have been through the process.

The Council also provides a 24-hour, seven day a week incident response capability for emergency incidents involving hazardous substances, as well as liaising closely with other emergency management services. In 2009-2010, the Regional Council attended 10 incidents involving hazardous substances, including a fire at Kerikeri High School, from which hazardous waste was also removed. An illegally laid cyanide incident was also attended in the Dargaville area.

Potentially contaminated sites

The Council manages a list of sites in the region that are, or could be, contaminated, called the Hazardous Activities and Industries List (HAIL).

In November 2009, the Council set about making this information available to the public. With the assistance of the three District Councils' rating data, all landowners of properties on the HAIL were notified and we have now released the HAIL data for Northland. This list is available at

www.nrc.govt.nz/hail

The Council will continue to update and develop this database, including new sites as they are found or sites already listed that require visits to confirm the information held.



Fuel tank removal at Dargaville.

Landfills

Regional Council staff also monitor Northland's two operational landfills every three to six months, and all closed landfills annually. Surface water, groundwater and sediment samples are collected from sites adjacent to operational landfills. These samples are analysed for contaminants, such as heavy metals. All landfills monitored in 2009-2010 complied with their consent limits and there was no significant contamination to nearby land or waterways.

A new landfill under development at Puwera, Portland is due to open in November 2010 so Northland's refuse will no longer be transported to Redvale, Albany.



Ahipara Landfill, which is monitored by Regional Council staff.

Solid waste management

The Regional Council has a Waste Minimisation Strategy and takes part in events such as eDay, with the aim of encouraging industry, business and households to reduce their waste production for the benefit of the environment. To find out how you can reduce rubbish in your home, go to www.reducerubbish.govt.nz

eDay is a national event at which the public can drop-off computer waste and cellphones for recycling at designated collection points on a specified day each year. An estimated 95 percent of the equipment collected is recyclable or reusable. The waste is shipped to purpose-designed facilities that can remove reusable materials from the waste in an environmentally sustainable way. This means that waste is not dumped on third world markets that may not have the facilities to dispose of the waste safely.

In 2009, 40 tonnes of obsolete computer equipment and unwanted mobile phones were collected from depots in Kaitiāia, Kaikohe, Kerikeri and Whāngārei. More than 16,432 cars dropped off 83,536 items nationally. The total amount of waste collected across the country was 976 tonnes, waste which would otherwise have ended up in landfill.



Putting Northland first

WHĀNGĀREI: 36 Water Street, Private Bag 9021, Whāngārei Mail Centre,
Whāngārei 0148; Phone 09 438 4639, Fax 09 438 0012.

DARGAVILLE: 61B Victoria Street, Dargaville; Phone 09 439 3300, Fax 09 439 3301.

KAITĀIA: 192 Commerce Street, Kaitāia; Phone 09 408 6600, Fax 09 408 6601.

ŌPUA: Unit 10, Industrial Marine Park, Ōpua; Phone 09 402 7516, Fax 09 402 7510.

Freephone: 0800 002 004 24/7 Environmental Hotline: 0800 504 639

E-mail: mailroom@nrc.govt.nz Website: www.nrc.govt.nz

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/companies/northland-regional-council

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