

Information sheet

Disaster recovery

Local government disaster recovery

This information sheet outlines the ways in which the Department of Environment and Science (DES) can help local governments with recovery and reconstruction work following the flooding and damage caused by natural disasters, such as cyclones.

For more information about any of the matters listed below, or for assistance not specifically set out in this information sheet, call the DES Local Government Recovery Coordinator on 1300 130 372 (choose option 4). Information on applying for temporary emissions licence is in section 9 of this information sheet.

1. Quarries

The department can issue a temporary emissions licence to allow quarries to operate outside their permitted hours of operation to provide material for emergency recovery works. See section 9 for information on applying for a temporary emissions licence.

If you need to increase the maximum allowable amount of material that may be extracted from a quarry, contact the DES Local Government Recovery Coordinator on 1300 130 372 (choose option 4).

2. Waste transfer and disposal

If you need to stockpile debris and waste from recovery or clean-up work on a site that is not a registered waste transfer station or landfill, the department will help you to choose an appropriate site and advise on how to manage it to minimise the chance of harm to the environment. Contact the DES Local Government Recovery Coordinator on 1300 130 372 (choose option 4) for more information.

If you need to extend the operating hours of an existing waste transfer station or landfill, the department can issue a temporary emissions licence. See section 9 for information on applying for a temporary emissions licence.

If you need to vary the type of waste that can be accepted at an existing facility, please contact the DES Local Government Recovery Coordinator on 1300 130 372 (choose option 4).

3. Sewage treatment plants

The department can issue a temporary emissions licence to authorise bypass events that are not ordinarily permitted by your environmental authority or, if a release is urgently needed to avoid an emergency, the department can issue an emergency direction. See section 9 for information on applying for a temporary emissions licence.

Where sewage treatment plants have suffered damage that affects their treatment capacity, the department can approve a transitional environmental program to authorise non-compliance with environmental authority conditions while repair work is underway. For more information see the guideline *Transitional environmental program* available at www.qld.gov.au using the publication number ESR/2016/2277 as a search term.

4. Water treatment

If inflow of sediment or sludge is impacting a water treatment plant, the department can issue an emergency direction or temporary emissions licence to vary discharge limits to ensure ongoing water supply. Contact the DES Local Government Recovery Coordinator on 1300 130 372 (choose option 4) for more information.

5. Ports

If build-up of sediment inhibits the operation of a port, the department can issue a temporary emissions licence to authorise an increase in dredging operations and the disposal of spoil, and assist with coordinating marine park permits for disposal if required. Contact the DES Local Government Recovery Coordinator on 1300 130 372 (choose option 4) for more information.

6. Hazardous materials

The department can help with advice on managing and cleaning up hazardous materials. Contact the DES Local Government Recovery Coordinator on 1300 130 372 (choose option 4) for more information.

7. Coastal structures

If lawful structures such as public boat ramps, pontoons, jetties beach access structures, boardwalks, viewing structures, netted swimming enclosures, pedestrian/bikeway bridges, stormwater infrastructure, roads, carparks, paths, seawalls or revetments have been damaged or destroyed, they can be repaired or rebuilt under the terms of the self-assessable code without local governments having to apply for an approval. Certain maintenance work on existing lawful work is considered to be excluded works and can be carried out without the need for a development application.

Works such as beach re-profiling or beach nourishment for the purposes of managing impacts from coastal erosion can also be carried out under the terms of the self-assessable code.

The *Code for accepted development for tidal works, or work completely or partly in a coastal management district* is available at www.qld.gov.au using the publication number EPP/2017/3930 as a search term. The guideline *Excluded work (coastal)* is also available using the publication number EPP/2016/2081 as a search term. Contact the DES Local Government Recovery Coordinator on 1300 130 372 (choose option 4) for more information.

8. Wildlife

Where the disaster has caused problems with crocodiles, flying foxes or other wildlife, contact the DES Local Government Recovery Coordinator on 1300 130 372 (choose option 4).

9. Temporary emissions licences

The department can issue a temporary emissions licence to change the conditions of an environmental authority to allow more contaminants to be released (such as sewage or sludge) or to extend hours of operation.

An application form is available at www.qld.gov.au using the publication number ESR/2015/1727 as a search term. Additional information on applying for a temporary emissions licence is in the guideline *Temporary emissions licence*, which is also available using the publication number ESR/2015/1724 as a search term.

The application fee for a temporary emissions licence is detailed in the information sheet *Fees for permits for environmentally relevant activities (ERAs)*, which is available at www.qld.gov.au using the publication number ESR/2015/1721 as a search term.

You will need to provide the following information:

- The environmental authority number for the affected site.
- The condition number(s) that you want to change.
- What change you need. For example, 'Extend quarry hours of operation to 5am to 9pm'; or 'Release untreated sewage from release point A1'.
- If the information is easily available to you, please give a summary of sensitive environments that might be affected by the change (for example, nearby residents who might be kept awake by noise from a quarry, or nearby wetlands that might be affected by sewage releases).
- A brief summary of the reasons for the change (a dot point summary will be sufficient). Reasons could include, 'To allow more quarry material to be extracted for emergency road repairs'; or 'To avoid an uncontrolled release of untreated sewage from the sewage treatment plant'.
- A brief summary of the potential impacts on nearby residents or businesses (a dot point summary will be sufficient). Impacts could include, 'Disturbance to nearby residents from the noise of quarry operations'; or 'Small increase in public health risk from faecal coliforms'.

If possible, contact your [local DES office](#) to discuss the proposed change before you lodge the application form.

You should email or fax the application form to Permit and Licence Management (PaLM) on email: palm@des.qld.gov.au or fax: (07) 3330 5875. If you need to lodge the form outside business hours, please call 1300 130 372. The after hours operator will have an on-call officer contact you to arrange lodgement.

10. Further information

The latest version of this publication can be found at www.qld.gov.au using the publication number ESR/2015/1814 as a search term.

Version history

Version	Date	Description of changes
1.00	29 January 2013	Document first published
2.00	14 April 2014	Amended to apply to natural disasters generally rather than specifically to Cyclone Oswald, updated coastal structures information for the self-assessable code and updated template and formatting.
3.00	15 April 2014	Amended to include reference to fee for temporary emissions licence.
4.00	20 February 2015	Amended to include updated coastal self-assessable code information.
4.01	15 August 2016	Added publication number ESR/2015/1814 and updated to current corporate style. Added publication number for referenced documents.
5.00	29 March 2017	Updated for Cyclone Debbie. Updated contact details for PaLM and replace reference to development approval with environmental authority.
6.00	25 September 2017	Document publication numbers updated in Coastal Structures section. Website links updated.
6.01	15 June 2018	Document rebranded to align with machinery of government changes