



Even biodegradable  
detergents pollute the  
environment and are not  
permitted to enter the  
stormwater system

## The Law

In New Zealand, the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) is a law designed to protect our environment. Under the RMA, it is illegal to discharge any substance into water, the stormwater system, land, or air, unless authorised by a resource consent or permitted under a district or regional plan.

Polluters may face serious consequences, including:

- Infringements of up to \$2000 for individuals or \$4000 for companies
- Abatement notices requiring immediate action to stop or prevent further harm
- Prosecution, which can result in fines of up to \$1,000,000 for individuals or \$10,000,000 for companies

**Landowners:** you are responsible for any work on your land. Make sure the contractor you hire knows how to do the job properly.

**Employers:** you are responsible for the actions of your staff. Make sure you train them well and give them the proper tools to do the job correctly.

**Workers:** you are responsible for doing the job in a manner that does not breach the environmental protections put in place by your employer. If you cause pollution, you and/or your company could be held liable for clean-up costs and/or penalties.



**Report all spills immediately to the Pollution  
Response Hotline on 09 377 3107**

## Pressure Washing or Water Blasting

Preventing Pollution in Our  
Waterways



Phone 09 301 0101 or visit  
[aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](http://aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)

## What's the Problem?

### Common Pressure Washing or Water-blasting Activities and Contaminants

Pressure washing or waterblasting around your home may seem harmless, but the waste it generates is far more concentrated than rainwater runoff. The contaminants that are removed when pressure cleaning contains contaminants such as grime, algae, moss, mould, lichen, sediment, grease, paint chips and dirt. These contaminants can be harmful to the environment.



Run-off from waterblasting a terracotta roof which went into a stream, causing pollution

Without proper controls in place, these contaminants can enter the stormwater system, which leads straight to streams, rivers and the sea.

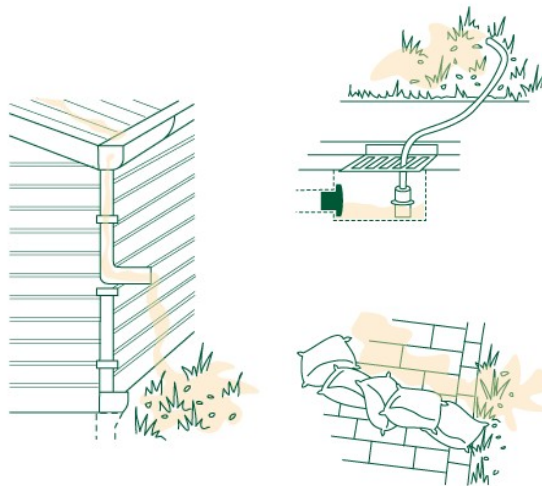
Before you begin waterblasting, put effective controls in place to capture or re-direct waste.

## What Can You Do?

### Good practice

If you are required to waterblast a roof, you must ensure that no contaminants enter the stormwater system through downpipes or drains. This can be accomplished by disconnecting downpipes and **diverting water to unsealed ground**, or **blocking drains** by using rubber bungs or other devices, and **removing the wash-water** upon completion of works.

Block catchpit outfalls and use a pump or bucket to remove wash-water to unsealed ground or a container / drum. Alternatively, use a vacuum truck to remove the waste water.



### Quick Tip

When quoting a job, factor in containment and sediment control options. This may include downpipe diversion devices, wet-vac hire, sand socks, drain mats or other equipment required to ensure environmental compliance. Contractors can be held liable for uncontrolled discharges of wash-water to the stormwater system.

## Quick Tips

When using moss and mould remover and biodegradable detergents,

- treat them like any other potentially harmful chemicals
- do not wash them off surfaces without controls in place
- ensure they do not enter the stormwater system
- do not apply them when rain is forecast.

Stormwater controls can be as simple as diverting wash-water away from stormwater drains to unsealed ground with reusable sandbags or sand socks.

## Environment Management Plans

If you are a company that routinely undertakes water blasting or pressure-washing activities it is beneficial to create an Environmental Management Plan (EMP). An EMP is a written document that identifies the risk of your activities to the environment and describes how you will manage these risks (i.e. control options and catch pit protection). Use your expertise and innovation to develop methods of containment, and ensure all staff are aware of the standards of work expected and of the contents of the EMP document.

