



**Murray Irrigation**

## **Pollution Incident Response Management Plan**

Plan-01-04

March 2026

[www.murrayirrigation.com.au](http://www.murrayirrigation.com.au)

PO BOX 528 DENILQUIN NSW 2710 | 1300 138 265

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## 1. Document Revision Summary

Rev No	Rev Date	Section Revised	Revision Description	Prepared by	Approved by
1	26/10/2021	References	updated	Penny Sloane	
2	02/02/2023	References	updated	Penny Sloane	
3	07/03/2024	Section 7.1	Removed reference to underground fuel tanks	Penny Sloane	Phil Sefton
4	12/03/2025	Format	updated	Penny Sloane	Phil Sefton
5	03/02/2026	Section 5.1 Section 6	Updated to reflect updated legislation	Penny Sloane	Caroline Smith

## 2. Purpose

Murray Irrigation holds an Environment Protection Licence (5014) issued by the Environment Protection Authority. Holders of Environment Protection Licences are required by *Protection of the Environment Legislation Amendment Act 2011 (Part 5.7A: Duty to prepare and implement pollution incident response management plans)* to prepare and implement a Pollution Incident Response Management Plan.

This document has been designed to be integrated into Murray Irrigations' suite of emergency response plans and procedures. It details the additional information required to be included in Pollution Incident Response Management Plan.

## 3. References

Document	Document ID
Emergency Preparedness and Incident Response Procedure	PROC-01-13
Emergency Response and Incident Management Plan	PLAN-01-02
Emergency Coordinator Contact List Poster	POST-01-02
Frontline Incident Response Plan	PLAN-01-13-06
Emergency Phone Call and Incident log-V2	FORM-01-13-07
Crisis Management Plan	PLAN-01-05
Hazard ID, Risk Assessment and Control	PROC-01-02
Risk Matrix	FORM-01-02-01
Guidelines for Emergency Response Drills	GUID-01-13-01
Emergency Response Drill	TPLT-01-13-01
Chemical Control Plan	ENV-010
Chemical Contingency Plan	ENV-020

## 4. Definitions

'Definitions in the Dictionary of the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*:

**Pollution incident** means an incident or set of circumstances during or as consequence of which there is or likely to be leak, spill or other escape or deposit of a substance, as a result of which pollution has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur. It includes an incident or set of circumstances in which a substance has been placed or disposed of on premises, but it does not include an incident or set of circumstances involving only the emission of any noise.

**Pollution** means:

- (a) water pollution, or
- (b) air pollution, or
- (c) noise pollution, or
- (d) land pollution.

**Water pollution or pollution of waters** means:

- (a) placing in or on, or otherwise introducing into or onto, waters (whether through an act or omission) any matter, whether solid, liquid or gaseous, so that the physical, chemical or biological condition of the waters is changed, or
- (b) placing in or on, or otherwise introducing into or onto, the waters (whether through an act or omission) any refuse, litter, debris or other matter, whether solid or liquid or gaseous, so that the change in the condition of the waters or the refuse, litter, debris or other matter, either alone or together with any other refuse, litter, debris or matter present in the waters makes, or is likely to make, the waters unclean, noxious, poisonous or impure, detrimental to the health, safety, welfare or property of persons, undrinkable for farm animals, poisonous or harmful to aquatic life, animals, birds or fish in or around the waters or unsuitable for use in irrigation, or obstructs or interferes with, or is likely to obstruct or interfere with persons in the exercise or enjoyment of any right in relation to the waters, or
- (c) placing in or on, or otherwise introducing into or onto, the waters (whether through an act or omission) any matter, whether solid, liquid or gaseous, that is of a prescribed nature, description or class or that does not comply with any standard prescribed in respect of that matter,  
and, without affecting the generality of the foregoing, includes:
  - (d) placing any matter (whether solid, liquid or gaseous) in a position where:
    - (i) it falls, descends, is washed, is blown or percolates, or

(ii) it is likely to fall, descend, be washed, be blown or percolate,

into any waters, onto the dry bed of any waters, or into any drain, channel or gutter used or designed to receive or pass rainwater, floodwater or any water that is not polluted, or

(e) placing any such matter on the dry bed of any waters, or in any drain, channel or gutter used or designed to receive or pass rainwater, floodwater or any water that is not polluted,

if the matter would, had it been placed in any waters, have polluted or have been likely to pollute those waters.

**waters** means the whole or any part of:

(a) any river, stream, lake, lagoon, swamp, wetlands, unconfined surface water, natural or artificial watercourse, dam or tidal waters (including the sea), or

(b) any water stored in artificial works, any water in water mains, water pipes or water channels, or any underground or artesian water.

## 5. Notification of a Pollution Incident

### 5.1 What must be notified – ‘material harm to the environment’

A pollution incident is required to be immediately notified if there is a risk of ‘material harm to the environment’, defined under section 147 of the POEO Act as:

#### 147 Meaning of material harm to the environment

(1) For the purposes of this Part—

(a) harm to the environment is material if—

(i) it involves actual or potential harm to the health or safety of human beings or to ecosystems that is not trivial, or

(ii) it results in actual or potential loss or property damage of an amount, or amounts in aggregate, exceeding \$50,000 (or such other amount as is prescribed by the regulations), and

(b) loss includes the reasonable costs and expenses that would be incurred in taking all reasonable and practicable measures to prevent, mitigate or make good harm to the environment.

(2) For the purposes of this Part, it does not matter that harm to the environment is caused only in the premises where the pollution incident occurs.

### 5.2 Responsibility to notify

Under Section 148 of the POEO Act, the following people have duty to notify a pollution incident occurring in the course of an activity that causes or threatens material harm to the environment:

- The person carrying on the activity;
- An employee or agent carrying on the activity;
- An employee carrying on the activity
- The occupier of the premises where the incident occurs

Once determined that the incident causes or threatens material harm to the environment, notification must be given immediately, ie. promptly and without delay, after the person becomes aware of the incident.

## 6. Emergency Response

It is expected that in the majority of circumstances involving a pollution incident Murray Irrigation will be providing a supporting role to the relevant emergency service.

In the event of a ‘pollution incident’ Murray Irrigation will undertake an initial assessment of the incident severity, including

assessing the impact on customers, community and environment. This analysis will be undertaken by the Emergency Response Coordinator.

If a pollution incident occurs, all necessary action should be taken to minimise the size and any adverse effects of the release. If the incident presents an immediate threat to human health or property, Fire and Rescue NSW, the NSW Police and the NSW Ambulance Service should be contacted first for emergency assistance. The other response agencies must still be contacted are:

- EPA NSW Environment line: 131 555
- SafeWork NSW: 131 050
- WaterNSW: 1300 662 077
- Relevant Local Council
  - Berrigan Shire: 03 5888 5100
  - Murrumbidgee Council: 1300 676 243
  - Federation Council: 1800 11 00 88
  - Edward River Council: 03 5895 3000
  - Murray River Council: 1300 087 004

## 6.1 Guide for actions to be taken to manage a pollution incident in supply system

- Call the relevant authorities (Police, Ambulance, Fire and Rescue, EPA, Councils etc)
- Contain the pollution source in as small an area as possible, consider the use of floating booms to contain spills, especially for substances that float on the water.
- Isolate the sections impacted by the spill using the automated regulators.
- Shut down outlets in the sections impacted by the spill, including stock and domestic pipes (may need to be undertaken manually)
- Contact affected customers as quickly as possible.
- Commence cleanup of the spill in coordination with relevant authorities.
- Contact customers when the cleanup has been completed and outlets are reinstated for use
- Complete incident reports and review of the response.

## 7. Testing plans

Murray Irrigation undertakes the testing of the Pollution Incident Response Management Plan every 12 months, and within one month of any 'pollution incident' occurring.

The testing of the plan may involve a number of different approaches and scenarios, including but not limited to the following:

- Desktop audit of the communication actions described in the plan, including the appointment of the Emergency Coordinator.
- A simulated event in the field involving Murray Irrigation staff and emergency services combined.
  - This type of testing is undertaken on an as needs basis, as it requires considerable resources to be allocated to the test from within and external to Murray Irrigation.

## 8. Identify potential hazards

### 8.1 Minor chemical or fuel spills at depot sites

The *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (WHS Regulation)* provides for the notification of Schedule 11 hazardous chemicals that are used, handled or stored above manifest quantities. Minor quantities of chemicals are kept on-site at the depots, below manifest quantities. Each Depot has a HAZMAT information box at the entrance gate.

#### 8.1.1 Control measures

All chemicals are stored in appropriately bunded areas with spill kits available on-site. All staff using chemicals undertake appropriate training (Chemcert accreditation). The majority of chemical usage and application is undertaken by contractors.

Plant and equipment shall be maintained in good condition (to prevent oil leaks, spills, etc.). This is conducted during the machinery pre-start inspections.

Where practicable fuels and chemicals shall not be stored or handled in the vicinity of water courses, drainage channels or water storage areas.

Training will be provided to promote the adoption of safe fuel and chemical handling practices. Training will also be provided for spill response.

#### 8.1.2 Risk assessment – after controls applied

- Consequence: minor
- Likelihood: Rare
- Risk Rating: Low (3)

## 8.2 Chemical or fuel spills into supply or drainage system

The spillage of chemical or fuel into a Murray Irrigation controlled waterway (supply or drainage system) will more likely be the result of an accident or illegal dumping by the general public.

Murray Irrigation will implement the Emergency Response Plan when notified of a chemical or fuel spill into a Murray Irrigation controlled waterway.

### 8.2.3 Control measures

Difficult to apply control measures to an event that is beyond Murray Irrigations' control. Ensure all staff are trained to enact the Emergency Response Plan immediately upon being informed about an incident involving the spill or potential spill of chemical or fuel into a Murray Irrigation controlled supply or drainage channel. The most likely scenario for this incident to occur is a vehicle accident.

### 8.2.2 Risk assessment – after controls applied

- Consequence: moderate
- Likelihood: unlikely
- Rating: moderate (9)

## 9. Safety Equipment

Murray Irrigation provides staff with the appropriate safety equipment to handle the chemicals stored at the depots.

Floating booms are stored at the depots for utilisation at the site of the incident to contain spills into waterways.