



**Scottish
Water**
Always serving Scotland

Clean environment

Preventing pollution from wheeled bin cleaning

Washing wheeled bins can cause pollution!

Water and detergents used to clean domestic wheeled bins can cause pollution if not disposed of correctly. Often these processes have no containment and the washings produced enter adjacent road side gullies. The gullies usually lead directly to local watercourses without any treatment and so chemicals and dirty water disposed of down these drains may lead to pollution. This guide explains how to minimise the pollution and comply with Scottish Water's policy on wheeled bin cleaning.

What are the dangers?

Domestic wheeled bins may be used for the disposal of any household item, including products used in the garden, DIY, medicines and for cleaning. Many of these products contain chemicals that are toxic.

Water used to wash wheeled bins may contain traces of these toxic chemicals and solid matter, such as vegetable peelings, which can cause sewer blockages if put directly down the drain. In addition, the detergents used to clean bins can also cause pollution, since many of them contain disinfectants and/or detergents which may be toxic.

It is, therefore, important that the wash water is disposed of in the correct manner to stop these chemicals causing pollution. Road side gullies are designed to take away rainwater only. They lead directly to local watercourses and pollution may be caused by using them to dispose of other waste. The disposal of industrial wastewater generated as a result of wheeled bin cleansing, via road gullies, is illegal.

What is Scottish Water's role?

Scottish Water (SW) is responsible for the control of industrial wastewater discharges made to public sewer. The Sewerage (Scotland) Act 1968 gives Scottish Water powers to monitor and regulate these discharges and to place conditions on the content of discharges to sewer.

After consultation with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), effluent arising from wheeled bin cleansing has been classified as a trade effluent and, thus, control of the discharge of the effluent in Scotland comes under the control of SW and, in particular, the Trade Effluent Quality Team.

SW has, therefore, developed a policy on the disposal of these effluents to ensure the environment is protected.

SW Wheeled Bin Policy

1. All wheeled bin cleansing operators should be licensed by the Unitary Local Authority (ULA). The ULA must ensure that operators are aware of the guidelines referred to within this policy.
2. All wastewater generated as a result of wheeled bin cleansing must be contained for disposal at a point approved by SW. The wastewater must then be screened to remove solid material and grease before being discharged to sewer at the approved point.
3. Acceptable disposal points include a point of access to the foul sewer within a trade premises. Alternatively, the ULA may designate a point of access to the foul sewer within their own premises. In either case, the disposal point must be approved, in advance, by SW. If no acceptable disposal point to sewer is available, SW would recommend that the wastewater is disposed of via a waste disposal contractor.
4. The discharge of wastewater to sewer generated as a result of wheeled bin cleansing, via the approved point, will be assessed for volume and strength by SW. If deemed necessary by SW, the occupier of the premises where the disposal is taking place will be required to apply for a formal Consent to discharge the wastewater under the Sewerage (Scotland) Act 1968.
5. The discharge of wastewater to sewer by a wheeled bin cleansing operator via a point not approved by SW may be regarded as an offence under the Sewerage (Scotland) Act 1968.
6. Solid material removed by screening must be contained and disposed of in line with the ULA's recommendations and with due regard to Duty of Care responsibilities. On no account should screened solid material be discharged to sewer.
7. Any chemicals used in the process of wheeled bin cleaning, and intended to be discharged to sewer, must be approved in advance by SW.

Information for operators of wheeled bin cleaning

Each Unitary Local Authority has a different procedure for licensing operators so you should contact the Environmental department of the relevant ULA. The number can be found in the phone book or on their website.

You should contact SW to discuss both your containment procedures and disposal point **prior** to commencing operation. We will be able to advise you of points in your area, and how to get a point approved if there is not one local to you. Call our Customer Helpline on **0845 601 8855** and ask to speak to a member of the Trade Effluent Quality team.

Standpipe Hire Procedures

If you require direct access to Scottish Water's supply network by use of a fire hydrant, then you must use a licensed standpipe provided by Scottish Water. Licensed standpipes can be hired on an annual or quarterly basis and are tagged to indicate the return date. If not used correctly, standpipes can represent a potential risk to the continuity of supply and water quality to all of our customers. If you would like to find out more about the hire procedure, please contact our Customer Helpline on **0845 601 8855** during office hours and ask to speak to the Standpipe Hire Desk.

Use of unauthorised standpipes is illegal and could lead to prosecution.

Preventing Pollution

It is the responsibility of all individuals and companies to ensure that their activities do not harm the environment. The fines for pollution are up to £40,000, and those responsible for pollution can face a massive clean-up bill and possible prosecution. We are asking everyone to play their part in protecting our shared environment and we appreciate your co-operation in our work.

Further Information

If you need to speak to someone directly or need more information and advice on pollution prevention/trade effluent quality please call our Customer Helpline on **0845 601 8855** and ask to speak to a member of our Trade Effluent Quality team.

Please call our Emergency Helpline on **0845 600 8855** to report an emergency relating to any risk of water pollution to the public water supply or sewer system.

You can write to us at:

Scottish Water
PO Box 8855
Edinburgh
EH10 6YQ

Alternative formats of this guide can be made available free of charge. For information on Braille, large print, audio and variety of languages, please call 0845 606 8855.

We record all calls for quality and training purposes.

If you have any questions about Trade Effluent or Scottish Water, please call our Customer Helpline on **0845 601 8855**

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