



**BULLER**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL  
Te Kaunihera O Kawatiri

# Trade waste discharge fee

**Find out how the trade waste fee affects businesses**

## Why does Council charge for trade waste discharge?

The operational costs and effectiveness of the Westport wastewater treatment plant are impacted by the volumes and composition of wastewater generated by typical commercial operations. Every council in New Zealand charges commercial properties for wastewater discharge and fees vary from a few hundred to tens of thousands of dollars per year.

## Who can discharge trade waste?

For most standard businesses, your discharges will be a permitted activity. But, if you discharge high volumes (in excess of 1,001 litres per day) or if chemicals, metals or potentially toxic substances are present—you will need to apply for a conditional consent.

## Why is my business being charged?

Many small businesses, like retail shops with less than four employees, won't be charged a commercial discharge fee, but all commercial premises are charged a standard sewage rate, equivalent to a residential house. Your business has been assessed as either exceeding what a standard residential property would discharge, or it matches an activity (like a café or laundry) on our permitted activity table that either discharges significant volumes or might contain substances (like grease or chemicals) that increase the operational costs of our treatment plant.

## Why has my trade waste charge increased?

Council signalled an increase in commercial wastewater fees for 2021/22—the first increase since 2012. Operational costs, such as electricity and labour rates have increased substantially over the past decade, as have our maintenance and replacements programme costs as the system has aged. Over the same period, domestic sewage rates rose almost 50%. The average fee for a Westport commercial property is \$424 per year.

## What can I do if I don't think this charge is fair?

Fairness is important, and our recent review of commercial charges was mindful that similar sized business and activities should be charged equitably. However, if you believe you are being charged

## What is trade waste?

Simply any volume of liquid or solid matter that finds its way into our wastewater system.

This is referred to by all New Zealand councils as trade waste, but it should not be confused with solid waste/general rubbish.

too much, you may opt to submit a formal trade waste consent application.

An application fee of \$200+GST will be charged, along with any costs or fees incurred during the assessment. Council will measure your discharge volumes and have samples taken and analysed before determining whether the discharge is a permitted or conditional activity and then applying a calculation from the tables in our Annual Plan.

## Do I have to pay this invoice in full immediately?

Council accepts that some businesses may be unable to pay their trade waste fee in one lump sum. Provided arrangements are made with our Customer Service team, we're more than happy to accommodate payments by instalments—without attracting any additional penalties or fees.

## What if I refuse to pay?

As these charges were notified via our Annual Plan processes, they are valid and legally binding fees and cannot be ignored. The trade waste discharge fees contribute to the costs of our wastewater treatment system and any shortfall in budgeted revenue will, by necessity, result in higher rates for our ratepayers.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have further questions, or would like more information please contact our Customer Service team via email [info@bdc.govt.nz](mailto:info@bdc.govt.nz) or phone **0800 807 239**.

**bullerdc.govt.nz**