



Discharge into the Awanui River from the Kaitiāia wastewater treatment plant.

Environmental compliance performance targets:

- Monitor and enforce compliance with resource consent conditions, regional rules and relevant statutory requirements – **ACHIEVED.**
- Document and implement monitoring programmes on the council's consent monitoring database and report as required for each programme – **ACHIEVED.**
- 100 percent of all instances of significant non-compliance are followed up and enforcement action taken where necessary – **NOT ACHIEVED (69 percent achieved, resources prioritised for prosecutions).**
- Report results to the council monthly and annually in the Northland Regional Council Annual Report – **ACHIEVED.**

Key points 2010-2011

- 65 percent of consents monitored were fully compliant, 24 percent of consents monitored had minor non-compliance and 11 percent of consents monitored were significantly non-compliant.
- During the 2010-2011 financial year the council instigated four prosecutions – one for drainage and vegetation clearance in a wetland and three farm dairy effluent discharges.

In 2010-2011

- 233 abatement notices and 188 infringement notices were issued by the council;
- Just over 50 percent were issued for a breach of the rules in a regional plan; and
- The remainder were issued as a result of a breach of resource consent.

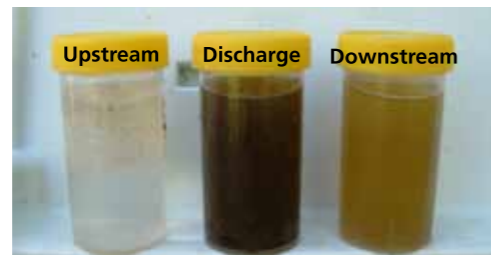
The Northland Regional Council is responsible, under the Resource Management Act (1991), for the control of activities that may have a negative effect on our environment.

These activities – such as discharging a substance to air or water – are controlled by rules in regional plans and, if required, by resource consents.

In order to make sure that activities are not having an effect on the environment, the council monitors compliance with these rules and the conditions of resource consents.

Environmental incidents reported to the council's Environmental Hotline are investigated as and when they are reported. Details for environmental incidents in 2010-2011 can be found in the Environmental Incidents report card or at www.nrc.govt.nz/amr.

How is compliance measured?



Change in water colour from upstream to downstream of a discharge.

- Be significantly non-compliant – they are having, or have the potential to have, a major or significant effect on the environment.

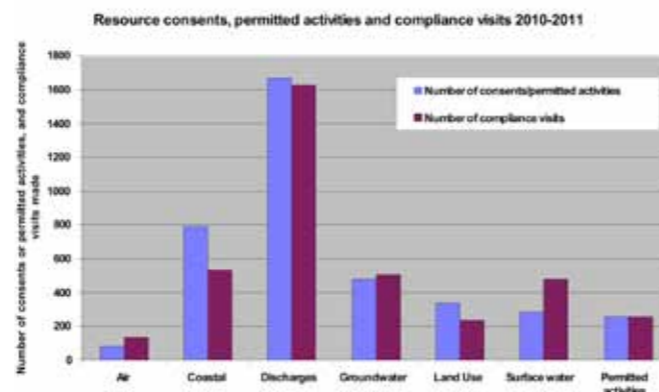
In cases of significant non-compliance, the council can take enforcement action to stop unlawful activities, or fine or prosecute a serious offender, and restore the affected area. Prosecution is generally a last resort.

When a resource consent or permitted activity is monitored, it is graded according to its level of compliance. Activities can:

- Be fully compliant – within the rules or resource consent limits;
- Have minor non-compliance – where there is a breach of a rule or resource consent condition, but there are no significant adverse environmental effects (effects may be minor or none at all); or

Activities requiring monitoring

During the 2010-2011 monitoring year, there were a total of 4025 consented activities, and 260 registered permitted activities in the council's database. All of the registered permitted activities relate to non-consented dairy farms.

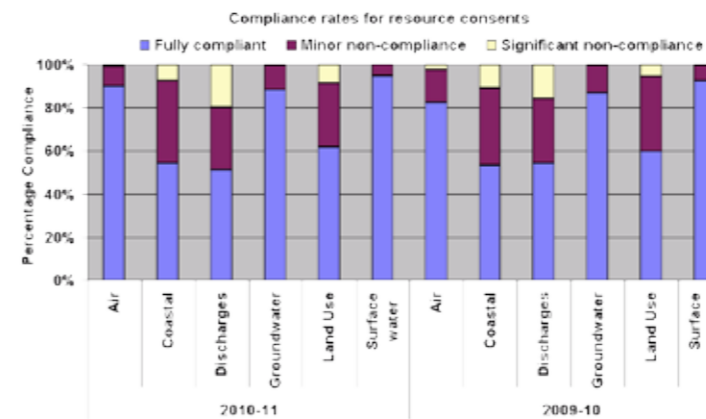


The largest number of activities relate to the discharge of a contaminant – such as farm dairy effluent or stormwater – to land or to water. More than one compliance visit was made to some surface water take resource consents during the drought conditions. For coastal consents, 448 consents did not require monitoring in 2010-2011.

Compliance assessments 2010-2011

Monitoring requirements are different for each consented activity and are based on how long the activity lasts, the scale of the activity and the potential for it to adversely affect the environment.

In 2010-2011, 3533 monitoring visits were made by regional council staff. The graph below breaks these monitoring visits into the consented activity by type, and compares compliance rates to 2009-2010.



Compliance assessment results

Activities with the highest rate of significant non-compliance were those relating to the discharge of a contaminant into the environment – including farm dairy effluent. Coastal activities had the second highest rate of significant non-compliance.

Significant non-compliance in relation to coastal activities was due to aquaculture and the condition of oyster farms in some harbours. This situation is being addressed by a central government initiative.

Coastal structures requiring maintenance also contributed to the instances of significant coastal non-compliance. The third highest rate of significant non-compliance was for land-use activities and includes earthworks undertaken without adequate sediment controls.

What is being done?

If a consented activity is found to be non-compliant, or is operating outside the rules of a regional plan, the council can:

- Make an on-site agreement to fix the problem;
- Issue a warning letter and request remedial action;
- Issue an abatement notice – this will require a person to stop or not start a non-compliant action, or fix a non-compliant action;
- Issue an infringement notice – which carry set level fines;
- Serve an enforcement order to fix the problem; and
- In cases of significant non-compliance, the council may also choose to prosecute an offender.

CASE STUDY: Sewage treatment plants

In Northland, Far North District Council (FNDC), Kaipara District Council (KDC) and Whāngārei District Council (WDC) are responsible for thirty community wastewater treatment plants (WWTP).

All 30 treatment plants operate under resource consents from the Northland Regional Council. Twenty-four of these consents are for discharges to water while the remaining six are for discharges to land. The regional council monitors these consents on a regular basis to ensure compliance with consent conditions and to assess the impact on the environment. A summary of compliance issues is shown in the table below.

All Northland councils are active participants in the Northland Sewage Accord which is co-ordinating improvements to WWTP. Twenty-five of the 30 district council sewage schemes have modern consents, issued in 2004 or later. Twenty-nine are less than 10 years old and four are currently being processed for replacement consents.

Council	Issues	Actions/improvements
KDC 5 WWTP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four plants are operating well. One WWTP (Mangawhai) has inadequate irrigation area to consistently comply with land application conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The regional council is working with KDC and its contractors to sort this issue.
WDC 9 WWTP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seven plants are operating well. Operational issues with two WWTP (Hikurangi and the Whāngārei main WWTP) have resulted in poorer quality effluent than required being discharged at times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WDC is currently reviewing operation and upgrade options for the main WWTP. Recent upgrade to Hikurangi WWTP has resulted in improvements. Further work is required.
FNDC 16 WWTP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eight plants are all operating well. Fourteen management plans are outstanding. Three plant upgrades have not been done (Kaikohe, Kaeo, Kaitiāia). Some water quality conditions of consent are not met at times at six plants (Hihi, Paihia, Taipā, Kaikohe, Kaitiāia, Whatuwhiwhi). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed schedule for management plans to be submitted. Overdue upgrades are now programmed or are being worked through as part of section 127 consent reviews. The regional council is working with FNDC to make improvements to bring all WWTP into compliance.

New floating wetlands installed on the Kaitiāia sewage pond to reduce blue-green algae.

