

INFOSHEET FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS WEED HYGIENE MANAGEMENT FOR DEVELOPERS

Good weed hygiene management benefits developers, potential landholders and the community.

If hygiene is poor, weeds may be introduced to, or spread from, a development site. This may:

- breach legal obligations, and result in costly control and rehabilitation actions, as well as fines,
- increase development costs,
- reduce property values,
- compromise natural values, or
- increase management costs for adjacent and other land managers

Weed management obligations for developers may come from several sources, including:

- Tasmania's state weed management legislation, the *Weed Management Act 1999*, or
- conditions as part of the development approval process

The *Weed Management Act 1999* identifies plants that are declared weeds in this state. Each declared weed has its own weed management plan which specifies the management actions land owners and managers are required to undertake to control and prevent the spread of the declared weed. These include ensuring that materials (such as soil, gravel) and equipment do not contain weed seeds or other parts of weeds that can re-grow. It is the developer's responsibility to ensure that all activities associated with the development comply with the Act.

It may also be a condition of planning permit that a weed hygiene or weed management plan is provided to Council by the developer. Depending on the complexity of the weed management problem, it may be necessary to engage a consultant to complete these plans.

The Huon Valley Weed Management Strategy 2007 – 2012 identifies four levels of priority weeds; the level of the weeds present on site or nearby will determine the type of actions a Weed Hygiene Plan must contain (as a minimum).

Weed Hygiene Plans

Weed hygiene plans should contain information on how weed introduction to the development site will be prevented. This should detail how machinery and equipment will be cleaned down prior to entering the site, the source of materials with the potential to contain weeds (including gravel, soil, seed for revegetation/stabilisation), and any other mitigation measures that might be put in place to prevent weed introductions.

A weed hygiene plan should also specify the measures required to prevent weed spread from the development site if weeds are present.

A weed management plan should provide details of how existing weeds will be managed. The plan should list all priority weed species present on the site, and provide details of how these weeds will be

managed. Where it is proposed that plant material will be removed from site (e.g. taking weeds to a local waste transfer station), Council should be consulted.

Vehicle Clean-down

As a minimum requirement, a Weed Hygiene Plan must ensure that machinery and equipment should be free of any plant material, and should be free of soil and mud. This can be achieved by a combination of removing large clods of soil and lumps of mud, wash-down, and/or blow-down.

For general cleaning procedures the following standard applies:

- remove only those cover plates etc that can be quickly and easily removed and replaced
- no clods of dirt or loose soil should be present after clean-down.
- Radiators and vehicle interiors should be free of accumulations of seed / plant material

While it is seldom practical to establish a fixed wash-down facility, it is possible to use bushfire slip-on units, small fire pumps or portable high-pressure wash units. A shovel, crow bar and stiff brush are also useful. Where a blow-down only is required (where only dry plant matter and dust is present, or where water would damage sensitive equipment), compressors or portable blower vacs may be used along with a small brush.

The weed hygiene plan should identify a hardpan site within the development area at which equipment, machinery etc is cleaned prior to leaving the site. A single site helps reduce the risk of weeds being spread throughout the site. It also becomes possible to monitor for possible weed movement and take cost-effective measures to control any weeds that might grow.

When identifying a suitable site for clean-down, the following should be considered:

- the edge, or nearby, any areas where weeds need to be contained; choose sites where the land slopes back into an infested area or an adjacent area not susceptible to the problem,
- ensure run-off will not enter any watercourse or waterbody,
- avoid sensitive vegetation or wildlife habitat, e.g. remnant native vegetation,
- select mud-free sites (e.g. well grassed, gravel, bark or timber corded) which are gently sloped to drain effluent away from the washdown area,
- allow adequate space to move tracked vehicles, and
- avoid potential hazards, e.g. powerlines

Note that low loaders are not a suitable platform for washing machinery.

Where there will be large quantities of effluent or there is a risk of extensive run-off, the wash-down area should be bunded (a barrier installed to contain potential leaks and spillage). Depending on the location, the potential for environmental harm (due to contaminated run off) and scale of weed risk, it may be sufficient to use items such as hay bales to slow runoff and contain solid waste material.

Further assistance

Information on weed management can be found at:

- Huon Valley Weed Management Strategy 2007 – 2012 (www.huonvalley.tas.gov.au)
- The Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment Weed Index at www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au (weeds, pest & disease link) which includes images of weed species
- Huon Valley Council's website (<http://www.huonvalley.tas.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=538>) and Huon Valley Council's Natural Resource Management unit - (03) 6264 0345
- The Tasmanian Washdown Guidelines for Weed and Disease Control Edition 1 at www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au (weeds, pest & disease link then weed hygiene link)

Please Note: The information provided in this guide is only intended to be a summary. All sites are considered on their individual merits and therefore situations may vary. It is recommended that you seek independent professional advice and / or contact Council's Natural Resource Management Unit on (03) 6264 0358.