



# CIRCULAR NO: PSC 88

## SUBJECT: USE OF HERBICIDES IN WATER CATCHMENT AREAS

### Purpose

PSC 88 is for the purpose of protecting surface and ground water sources that are used as sources of water for human consumption from contamination by herbicides. The document is a best practice policy statement that applies to all government departments and their contractors.

### Definitions

The term "Water Catchment Area" refers to:

- (a) proclaimed public drinking water source areas (i.e. water reserves, catchment areas and underground water pollution control areas proclaimed under the *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947* or *Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act 1909*), and
- (b) reserves vested for the purpose of water supply; and
- (c) any other area that is designated by licensed water service providers and the Department of Water and confirmed by the Executive Director, Public Health

"Blanket Area Spraying" means the application of herbicide by boom sprayer, aircraft, misting machines, and like apparatus capable of treating a wide swath at one pass and these swaths being matched by continuous passes.

1. Other than with the expressed written approval of the Executive Director, Public Health, the only herbicides that may be used in water catchment areas are:

2,4-D	amitrole
fluazifop-p-butyl	glyphosate
hexazinone*	triclopyr

metsulfuron methyl - **only** when used for hand/spot spraying of weeds (eg blackberry and cape tulip)

\*(hexazinone can affect native vegetation and therefore should be used with care or advice sought from the Department of Environment and Conservation where sensitive native plants are present.)

2. These herbicides may only be used when no other means are suitable for the control of weeds.
3. 2,4-D may only be used when the weeds are resistant to the other specified herbicides or when other chemicals are not sufficiently selective.
4. The specified herbicides may be used against declared plants and other undesired weeds on water catchments and water channels or in the vicinity of reservoirs provided timings, techniques and precautions ensure there is no spray drift or early run off from treated areas likely to contaminate reservoirs, rivers or streams. All applications must be under the supervision of a person experienced in the use of herbicides.



5. Application is to be limited to injection techniques or direct spraying of individual weeds or clumps of weeds by apparatus producing a coarse or large droplet spray. Other than with the expressed written approval of the Executive Director, Public Health, blanket area spraying is not acceptable.
6. No mixing of the herbicide is to occur within 50 metres of reservoirs, rivers or streams. Except with the written permission of the Executive Director, Public Health, no application is to be made within 20 metres of reservoirs or rivers and streams when flowing. Application may be made within 20 metres of dry river and stream beds during the summer months.
7. Empty containers and all equipment to be removed from the catchment area before washing and disposal.
8. Other than with the expressed written approval of the Executive Director, Public Health, any unused herbicide is to be removed from the catchment area and no other herbicide except for immediate requirements is to be stored there.
9. Rates of application, safety directions and precautions on labels of the original container of the herbicide shall be strictly adhered to.
10. Records of the amounts and dates of use of herbicides on catchments are to be retained. They maybe required for investigation of incidents or complaints.

Dr M Stevens  
Delegate of the  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PUBLIC HEALTH**  
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