

## Photographic processing

Released: 12 December 2017

Trade waste discharges from photographic processing machines/equipment could harm the sewerage system. The Photographic Uniform Regulations for the Environment (PURE) Code of Practice has been used to develop this guideline.

This guideline applies to:

- waterless and water wash minilabs
- x-ray/microfilm laboratories
- dental/medical/veterinary clinics
- x-ray centres
- hospitals
- graphic arts studios
- schools.

## Disposal options for high-silver waste

High-silver (fixer or bleach-fix) solutions are not permitted to be discharged to the sewerage system in any quantity. They must be managed by one of the following:

1. Installation of a silver recovery unit (with proven capability to reliably meet discharge quality standards) for on-site treatment and disposal to the sewerage system.
2. Secure on-site storage, pending collection by an EPA licensed contractor and off-site treatment and disposal.

## Pre-treatment requirements for sewer disposal option

- All high-silver solutions must be processed by a silver recovery unit.
- Discharge from the silver recovery unit must not exceed 50mg/l of residual silver.
- Buffer/Balancing/Neutraliser tanks are **not** required except for hospital photographic applications where silver recovery unit **batch discharges** exceed 40 litres.
- Buffer tanks are not required for **continuous flow through** silver recovery unit discharges in hospitals.
- Used water free of silver may be discharged directly to sewer.
- Chromium based cleaning solutions are not permitted.
- All discharges to sewer must comply with a pH of 6-10 units at all times.
- Copper waste pipes are **not permitted**. Acceptable alternatives are PVC, polyethylene or polypropylene.

## Best practice management aspects

- High-silver solutions must be stored in a bunded area and comply with [Bundling and Blind Tank Guideline](#).
- A wash water limiter or control system must be installed on all water wash processors so that water is only used when film or paper is being processed.
- The silver recovery unit is serviced by a competent technician in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Records to verify maintenance and routing performance test results are kept and made available to us on request.

## More information

Mains Water Protection (Australian Standard AS/NZS 3500.1:2015)

[Backflow Prevention Requirements - Office of the Technical Regulator](#)

[Restricted Wastewater Acceptance Standards](#)