



## Person drowns in plastic lined liquid waste pond

A person engaged to assist with the day-to-day activities at a septic liquid waste pond facility drowned when he slipped into one of the ponds. On the day of the incident the person was required to manually stop the water pump that controlled the level of liquid waste in the pond. The pond in which he drowned contained liquid waste to a depth of three metres, the walls were very steep and lined with a slippery geomembrane. There were no surrounding barriers to prevent him from slipping into the pond.

### Contributing factors

- There were no physical barriers around the waste ponds;
- No safe systems of work were in place when persons were required to enter the liquid waste pond area; and
- The use of a manually operated water pump that required persons to continually enter the liquid waste pond area.

### Action required

1. Ensure that physical barriers are suitable in nature and design to prevent access to liquid waste ponds
2. Installation of an automated water pump
3. Safe systems of work, including instruction, information, training and supervision for persons entering the liquid waste pond area
4. Provide appropriate devices to assist a person to exit the liquid waste pond
5. Adequate warning signage
6. Regular inspections to ensure that systems of work remain effective

### Further information

- Commission for Occupational Safety and Health Codes of Practice:
  - [Prevention of falls at workplaces](#), and
  - [Safe design of buildings and structures](#)
- Commission for Occupational Safety and Health Guidance notes
  - [Working alone](#), and
  - [General Duty of Care in Western Australian Workplace](#)

Further information can be obtained from WorkSafe's internet site [www.worksafe.wa.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au) or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email <mailto:safety@commerce.wa.gov.au>

This Alert contains safety information following inquiries made by WorkSafe about an incident or unsafe practice. The information contained in this Alert does not necessarily include the outcome of WorkSafe's action with respect to an incident. WorkSafe does not warrant the information in this Alert is complete or up to date and does not accept any liability to any person for the information in this report or as to its use.

A16220234