

Regional Council Rules Guidance

VEGETABLE WASHWATER MANAGEMENT

Version 2.0 | JUNE 2026



Regional Council Rules Guidance for Vegetable Washwater Management

Version 2.0 | June 2026

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This document supports the Vegetable Washwater Management Code of Practice. This document, Regional Council Rules Guidance for Vegetable Washwater Management, will be reviewed, as necessary, by Horticulture New Zealand Incorporated. Suggestions for alterations, deletions or additions to this document, should be sent, together with reasons for the change and relevant data and contact details of the person making the suggestion, to info@hortnz.co.nz.

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Regulatory context

Applying vegetable washwater to land needs to meet the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) and regional council requirements for discharges to land. This section is intended to assist growers understand the context and how the requirements can be met.

The RMA is relevant to the management of vegetable washwater as the washwater is considered a 'contaminant' and its application or irrigation to land is a 'discharge' under the RMA. The RMA defines contaminant and includes a substance that is likely to change the physical, chemical or biological condition of land, air or water into which it is discharged¹. Because vegetable washwater may contain sediment, nutrients, organic matter or chemical residues it is classified as a contaminant under the RMA because of the potential to change the condition of the land to which it is applied. The RMA also defines discharge: 'includes emit, deposit and allow to escape.' Therefore, the application or irrigation of vegetable washwater to land, including via a soakage pit, is a discharge under the RMA.

The RMA requires regional councils to manage the discharge of contaminants to air, land or water to ensure that effects of the discharge do not cause adverse effects. Hence the discharge rules in a regional plan need to be complied with for the management of vegetable washwater.

Most regional plans include permitted activity rules with conditions. If those conditions can be met, then the activity is permitted and no resource consent is required. However, the standards or conditions of the rule need to be met, with evidence to demonstrate compliance if requested. Examples of conditions could include setbacks from waterbodies, minimise ponding and runoff, or compliance with an industry or other code of practice.

If the permitted conditions cannot be met or there is no permitted activity rule, a resource consent for the discharge is required. The activity status for the consent will be stated in the plan and will be either restricted discretionary, discretionary, or non-complying. The requirements for the consent are set out in the plan and include matters that will be considered in an assessment of the application for consent. A resource consent application must address these requirements.

Depending on the regional council or unitary authority, applying vegetable washwater (including irrigating) to land can fall under two categories:

1. Specific horticulture washwater activity rules

Several councils have permitted activity pathways to discharge vegetable washwater to land, or discharge to land that may enter water. These councils have a set of conditions growers need to comply with. An example of this is Rule C.6.3.2 Horticulture wastewater discharges to land², in the Regional Plan for Northland.

2. General discharge of contaminants to land, or to land, that may enter water

If there is no specific rule, the discharge of vegetable washwater to land will fall under a general discharge to land, or discharge to land that may enter water rule, which may be permitted or require resource consent.

¹ Refer to the RMA for full definition.

² [Regional Plan for Northland](#). Rule C.6.3.2 Horticulture wastewater discharges to land - permitted activity.

Codes of Practice

A condition of a rule may require an activity to comply with a specific code of practice. A grower will need to be able to show how the activity meets the requirements of that code. Such a rule will refer to a specific version of the code of practice and that is the version that is applicable for assessing compliance with a rule, even if a more recent version is available. For example: the Northland Regional Plan Rule C.6.3.2 has: the discharge of horticulture washwater is undertaken in accordance with Section 2 of Horticulture New Zealand's *Vegetable Washwater Discharges Code of Practice 2017*.

In this rule, the 2017 version of the code of practice will remain until the plan is changed to refer to a later version.

The Vegetable Washwater Management Code of Practice 2026 (COP) may be used as part of a resource consent application to demonstrate how the vegetable washwater discharge will adopt best practice.

Regional Council rules

As part of the update of this COP, a rules review has been undertaken to understand what requirements growers need to comply with, when managing vegetable washwater. This is to ensure the guidance in this COP would support growers to meet their requirements.

This guidance document contains a set of relevant rules for each regional council and unitary authority. Growers may use this as a guide but should check with the relevant authority for the most up to date information before proceeding. You may also choose to engage a suitably qualified and experienced consultant planner to determine this for you.

As the Code of Practice is designed for application of vegetable washwater to land, the rules listed in *Regional Council Rules Guidance for Vegetable Washwater Management* are for discharges onto or into land where it may enter water. If a grower wishes to discharge directly to water then other rules will apply and the relevant plan should be considered to determine the rules and conditions which will apply and planning advice sought.

Each regional plan gives effect to the RMA and how access to natural resources (air, land and water) are governed in that region. At time of publication of this guidance document and the Vegetable Washwater Management Code of Practice, the RMA is undergoing reform. This means in future there may be new replacement Acts that govern how resources are managed which will be implemented through national direction or new plans. Until a new plan is operative in the region that you grow, the current rule framework will apply.

Regional Council rules tables

Northland

The Northland Regional Plan has a specific permitted activity rule for vegetable washwater when discharged to land.

Plan	Regional Plan for Northland Proposed Regional Plan for Northland February 2024
Rule #	C.6.3.2
Status	Permitted
Activity	Horticulture wastewater discharges to land - permitted activity
Definitions	Horticulture wastewater - Wastewater from vegetable washing and greenhouses which may include sediment and residues from the activity but does not include animal effluent or animal products. Other relevant definitions - refer to the plan: Intermittently flowing river, artificial watercourse, natural wetland, bore
Activity standards	The discharge of horticulture wastewater onto or into land is a permitted activity, provided: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) there is no discharge onto or into land within: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) 20 metres of a stream, continually or intermittently flowing river, artificial watercourse, lake, natural wetland, or the coastal marine area, or b) 20 metres of a neighbouring property owned or occupied by another person, or c) 50 metres of any dwelling owned or occupied by another person, or d) 20 metres of the head of any drinking water supply bore, and 2) the discharge does not result in ponding on the land for longer than three hours, and 3) the discharge of vegetable washwater is undertaken in accordance with <i>Section 2 of Horticulture New Zealand's Vegetable Washwater Discharge Code of Practice 2017</i>, and 4) the discharge of greenhouse nutrient solution is undertaken in accordance with the <i>Code of Practice for the Management of Greenhouse Nutrient Discharges 2007</i>, and 5) upon written request by the Regional Council, the person doing the activity keeps a written record of the following information and provides it to the Regional Council's Compliance Manager in the form and frequency specified in the request: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) dates and time of the discharge, and b) land application area, and c) application rates. <p>For the avoidance of doubt this rule covers the following RMA activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discharge of horticulture wastewater onto or into land (s15(1) and s15(2A)).
Activity status if permitted conditions not met	C.6.3.6 Wastewater discharges to land - discretionary activity The discharge, onto or into land, of <i>farm wastewater, horticulture wastewater</i> , contaminants associated with the making or storage of silage, contaminants associated with the disposal of dead stock or offal, or milk, and any associated discharge of odour to air, that are not permitted, restricted discretionary, noncomplying activity, or prohibited activities in C.6.3 Production land charges of this Plan, are discretionary activities. For the avoidance of doubt this rule covers the following RMA activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discharge of <i>farm wastewater, horticulture wastewater</i>, contaminants associated with the making or storage of silage, contaminants associated with the disposal of dead stock or offal, or milk onto or into land where it may enter water (s15(1)). • Discharge of <i>farm wastewater, horticulture wastewater</i>, contaminants associated with the making or storage of silage, contaminants associated with the disposal of dead stock or offal, or milk onto or into land, and any associated discharge of odour to air (s15(2A)).

Auckland

Plan	Auckland Unitary Plan https://unitaryplan.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/
Rule #	E4 Table E4.4.1 Activity table (A9)
Status	Permitted
Activity	Discharge of water and/or sediment onto or into land and/or into water from produce washing in a manner that does not result in runoff into surface water
Activity standards	<p><u>Produce Washwater specific standard</u> E4.6.2.9. Discharge of water and/or sediment onto or into land and/or into water from produce washing to land in a manner that does not result in runoff into surface water (1) The discharge must not contain contaminants other than sediment, and/or those contaminants generally found in agricultural soils and water. (2) The discharge must be land in such a manner that there is no runoff into surface water or onto other property.</p> <p><u>General standards for discharges of contaminants</u> All permitted activities in Table E4.4.1 Activity table must comply with the following activity specific standards as well as the general standards in Standard E4.6.1.</p> <p><i>E4.6.1 General standards for all permitted activities, controlled activities and restricted discretionary activities</i> All activities listed as permitted, controlled or restricted discretionary in Table E4.4.1 Activity table must comply with the following standards. (1) The discharge must not, after reasonable mixing, give rise to any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the production of any conspicuous oil or grease film, scum or foam, or floatable or suspended materials; (b) any conspicuous change in the colour or visual clarity; (c) any emission of objectionable odour; (d) the rendering of freshwater unsuitable for consumption by farm animals; (e) a change to the natural temperature of the receiving water by more than 3 degrees celsius; (f) a change in the natural pH of the water by more than 1pH unit; and (g) any significant adverse effect on aquatic life. </p> <p>(2) The discharge must not enter into any water supply catchment, or any areas identified in D8 Wetland Management Areas Overlay (excluding Wetland Management Area Number 450 Lake Pupuke), D5 Natural Lake Management Areas Overlay or D4 Natural Stream Management Areas Overlay except in the case of a discharge by a network utility operator carried out for maintenance, routine operations, or emergency works, provided there are no adverse effects on a Wetland Management Area, Natural Lake Management Area or Natural Stream Management Area. (3) The discharge must not cause erosion or scouring at the point of discharge or alter the natural course of the water body. (4) The discharge must not include washwater used for the external cleaning of a reticulated water supply system. (5) The discharge must be in accordance with best management practice to minimise the contaminants to the extent practicable.</p>
Activity status if permitted conditions not met	Discretionary Activity E4 Other Discharges of Contaminants (A15): Discharge of water or contaminants (including washwater) onto or into land and/or into water not complying with the relevant standards or not otherwise provided for by a rule in the Plan.

Waikato

The Waikato Regional Plan has a discretionary rule (3.5.4.5) for discharge of a contaminant into water or onto or into land that includes discharges from vegetable washing. There are permitted activity rules for a range of discharges but these do not include produce washwater so, the discretionary activity rule applies.

Proposed PC1 has added a new Policy 12 that sets out a range of requirements when considering resource consent applications for point source discharges in the Waikato and Waipa catchments. This policy is linked to existing discharge provisions in 3.5.3 Policy 2. Any discharge of vegetable washwater in these catchments will need to consider the requirements of Policy 12 when applying for resource consent.

Plan	Waikato Regional Plan Waikato Regional Plan - 3 Water module
Rule #	3.5.4.5 Discretionary Activity Rule - Discharges
Status	Discretionary
Activity	Any discharge of a contaminant into water, or onto or into land, in circumstances which may result in that contaminant (or any other contaminant emanating as a result of natural processes from that contaminant) entering water, that is not specifically provided for by any rule, or does not meet the conditions of a permitted or a controlled activity rule in this Plan, is a discretionary activity (requiring resource consent).

Bay of Plenty

The Bay of Plenty Regional Natural Resources Plan does not include specific rules for discharge of vegetable washwater. The activity is included In Chapter 6 as part of DW R8 Discharges to Water or Land which requires discretionary activity resource consent. There is no permitted activity rule.

If an activity is located in the Rotorua Lakes area then specific rules apply to discharges. Refer to Chapter 12 of the RNRP

Plan	Bay of Plenty Regional Natural Resources Plan https://atlas.boprc.govt.nz/api/v1/edms/document/A4378103/content Chapter 6 - Discharges to Water and Land
Rule #	DW R8 (Was Rule 37)
Status	Discretionary - Discharges to Water or Land
Activity	Any: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discharge of a contaminant to water. 2. Discharge of water to water. 3. Discharge of a contaminant onto or into land in circumstances which may result in the contaminant (or any other contaminant emanating as a result of natural processes from that contaminant) entering water. 4. Discharge of a contaminant from any industrial or trade premises onto or into land. <p>That is not:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Permitted by a rule in this regional plan. b) Permitted by a rule in any other Bay of Plenty regional plan. c) Prohibited by a rule in this regional plan. d) Restricted discretionary status by a rule in this regional plan. e) Controlled status by a rule in this regional plan. <p>Is a discretionary activity.</p>

This activity is also subject to the requirements of the rules in the RL Rotorua Lakes section of this regional plan. The activity will also be subject to the LR Lake Rotorua Nutrient Management rules if the discharge activity is within the Lake Rotorua groundwater catchment (see Map LR 1).

All discharges to surface water that are discretionary under this rule will be assessed against the Water Quality Classification of the receiving water body (refer to Schedule 9 and the Water Classification map).

Resource consent applicants who seek to exceed the relevant Water Quality Classification standards must provide evidence in their application to demonstrate how the adverse effects of the proposed activity will be avoided, remedied or mitigated to be consistent with IM O3.

Advisory Note

1 Cleanfill sites that do not discharge leachate or contaminants to land are included in the definition of 'earthworks' and addressed by rules in the Land Management section of this regional plan.

2 If a resource consent applicant is unable to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on the environment, and does not meet IM O3, the resource application is likely to be publicly notified and/or consent may be declined.

3 The application of fertiliser is permitted under DW R11 subject to compliance with the conditions of the Rule. If the application does not comply with DW R11, a resource consent is required under DW R8. The Regional Council prefer resource users to comply with DW R11 rather than apply for a resource consent.

Explanation/Intent of Rule

To allow the Regional Council to assess the adverse effects of any discharge of contaminants or water to the environment that is not otherwise addressed by other regional rules. The resource consent process is an appropriate means of assessing such effects. DW R8 applies to, but is not limited to, comprehensive catchment discharge consents for stormwater, discharges from contaminated sites, and large scale discharge of contaminants from trade and industrial premises (including waste disposal discharges).

Gisborne

The Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan has a specific section on diffuse discharges to land and includes a rule for discharges from commercial vegetable growing and cropping activities. 'Commercial vegetable growing' is not defined in the plan but the rules relate to all commercial vegetable growing and cropping activities which would include the vegetable washing activities. Therefore, the diffuse discharges rules will apply. Growers need to prepare and submit a Farm Environment Plan (FEP) and the vegetable washing and discharge of washwater to land should be included as part of the FEP. The specific rule will vary according to the date that the operation was established - both are provided below.

Commercial vegetable growing established prior to 14 October 2015

Plan	Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan - Chapter 6 https://www.gdc.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0031/89419/TRMP-Master-Part-C5-8-Region-Wide-Provisions.pdf
Rule #	6.2.9 (3)
Status	Permitted
Activity	Diffuse discharges from commercial vegetable growing and cropping activities lawfully established prior to 14 October 2015
Activity standards	<p>a) From 1 May 2021 onwards all commercial vegetable growing and cropping activities shall have prepared and submitted to the Consent Authority a Farm Environment Plan which has been certified by the Consent Authority as meeting the requirements outlined in Appendix H20. All commercial vegetable growing and cropping activities shall be carried out in accordance with the actions and timeframes specified in the certified Farm Environment Plan. An annual report shall be provided to the Consent Authority on the implementation of the Farm Environment Plan;</p> <p>b) From 1 July 2021, no cultivation is undertaken within 5 metres of the edge of any modified watercourse, permanent or intermittent stream, except where the Farm Environment Plan can demonstrate that a smaller setback of at least 1 metre can occur without adversely impacting on the quality of receiving waterbody and this is certified by the Consent Authority.</p> <p>Advisory Note: Farm Environment Plans will be assessed by the Consent Authority for compliance with the information requirements in Appendix H20. If a Farm Environment Plan which meets the Appendix H20 requirements is not produced by the 1 May 2021 then existing commercial vegetable growing and cropping activities will require a resource consent to continue.</p> <p>Advisory Note: Refer to the definitions of Intermittent Stream and Modified Watercourse because many "drains" are likely to meet these definitions and the requirements of the rule.</p>
Activity status if permitted conditions not met	6.2.9(8) Discretionary Diffuse discharges that do not meet the permitted activity standards for the rules in section C6.2 or is not provided for by another rule in this Plan.

Commercial vegetable growing established after 14 October 2015

Plan	Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan - Chapter 6 https://www.gdc.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0031/89419/TRMP-Master-Part-C5-8-Region-Wide-Provisions.pdf
Rule #	6.2.9 (4)
Status	Permitted
Activity	Diffuse discharges from new commercial vegetable growing, cropping dairy farming and intensively farmed livestock activities established after 14 October 2015 except where they are within 20 metres of an Outstanding Waterbody identified in Schedule G18

Activity standards	<p>a) A Farm Environment Plan which has been certified by the Consent Authority as meeting the requirements outlined in Appendix H20 must be prepared and submitted to the Consent Authority prior to the commencement of the activity. All commercial vegetable growing, cropping and intensively farmed stock activities must be carried out in accordance with the actions and timeframes specified in the certified Farm Environment Plan. An annual report shall be provided to the Consent Authority on the implementation of the Farm Environment Plan. Farm Environment Plans are only required under this activity standard for the area of land where the activity classified as “new” under this rule is being undertaken;</p> <p>b) Where dairy farming or intensively farmed stock activities are within a paddock adjoining a waterbody, all livestock shall be excluded from 5 metres from the top of the bank or edge of any permanently flowing stream, or the edge of any lake or wetland, or within 10 metres of the top of the bank or edge of any Aquatic Ecosystem Waterbody identified in Schedule G15, or any Regionally Significant Wetland identified in Schedule G17, or within 20 metres of any Outstanding Waterbody identified in Schedule G18. ;</p> <p>c) All permanent and intermittent streams and rivers that are crossed by formed stock crossings as part of the intensively farmed stock unit shall be bridged or culverted. This must be done by 1 July 2019 or when the activity is established if after this date. However, cattle, deer and pigs are able to enter waterbodies for the purpose of crossing from one side to the other provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. They are being supervised and are actively driven across the water body in one continuous movement; and ii. This occurs less frequently than once per week <p>d) No cultivation is undertaken within 5 metres of the edge of any modified watercourse, permanent or intermittent stream, unless the Farm Environment Plan can demonstrate that a smaller setback of at least 1 metre can occur without adversely impacting on the quality of receiving waterbody and this is certified by the Consent Authority.</p> <p>Advisory Note: The discharge of dairy farm effluent to land is a discretionary activity in accordance with Rule C6.2.3(13).</p> <p>Advisory Note: Stock access to the beds of river and lakes including stock crossings not addressed by the rule is subject to Rules C6.3.7(1) and C6.3.7(2).</p>
Activity status if permitted conditions not met	<p>6.2.9(8) Discretionary</p> <p>Diffuse discharges that do not meet the permitted activity standards for the rules in section C6.2 or is not provided for by another rule in this Plan.</p>

Hawkes Bay

The Plan includes a generic permitted activity rule for discharges to land and water – Rule 49- which applies region wide and has a range of conditions. Rule 49 also requires compliance with conditions in Rule 47 Discharges to surface water and Rule 48 Discharges of solid contaminants, including cleanfill, to land that will not enter water – refer to the plan for conditions of these rules.

If resource consent is required there are specific provisions for Tukituki, Tutaekuri, Ahurir, Ngaruroro and Karamu catchments which would need to be considered – refer to the plan for details.

Plan	Hawkes Bay Regional Resource Management Plan Hawke's Bay Regional Resource Management Plan - Chapter 6
Rule #	6.6.7 Rule 49 Discharges to land that may enter water
Status	Permitted
Activity	The discharge of contaminants onto or into land, in circumstances which may result in those contaminants (or any other contaminant emanating as a result of natural processes from those contaminants) entering water, pursuant to section 15 (1) (b) RMA, except as expressly regulated by other rules in this Plan.
Activity standards	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The rate of discharge shall be no greater than 50 m³/d. b. The discharge shall not result in a breach of any of the conditions set out in Rule 47. c. The discharge shall not result in a breach of any of the conditions set out in Rule 48. d. The point of discharge shall occur no less than 600 mm above the winter ground water table. e. There shall be no surface ponding in the area of discharge, or runoff of any contaminant into a surface water body as a result of the discharge. f. The discharge shall not result in any airborne liquid contaminant being carried beyond the boundary of the subject property. g. There shall be no discharge within 20 m of any surface water body, or over the Heretaunga Plains or Ruataniwha Plains unconfined aquifers as shown in Schedule IV, except for material extracted from a surface water body associated with the maintenance of legally established structures. h. There shall be no surface ponding in the area used to store, mix or use the organic material, and no runoff of contaminants into any surface water body. i. There shall be no discharge within 30 m of any bore drawing groundwater from an unconfined aquifer into which any contaminant may enter as a result of the discharge. j. The discharge shall not cause any degradation of existing ground water quality in confined aquifers in the Heretaunga Plains and Ruataniwha Plains aquifer systems. k. For other aquifers, the discharge shall not cause or contribute to a breach of the following guidelines after reasonable mixing: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) The "Drinking Water Quality Standards for New Zealand" (Ministry of Health, 1995). ii) The guideline for irrigation contained in the "Australian Water Quality Guidelines for Fresh and Marine Waters" (Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council, 1998) l. Where the quality of ground water in any aquifer encompassed by condition (k) breaches the standards specified in that condition prior to the discharge occurring, the discharge shall not cause any further degradation of the quality of ground water in any such aquifer after reasonable mixing.
Activity status if permitted conditions not met	<p>Rule 52 Discharges that do not comply with rules 9-14, 16, 31-51 – Discretionary Activity</p> <p>The discharge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contaminants onto or into land, or into water, or • water into water <p>which does not comply with any condition on a permitted activity rule, or any standard or term on a controlled activity rule within this Plan, but which is not expressly classified as a discretionary, noncomplying or prohibited activity.</p>

Taranaki

The Taranaki Freshwater Plan has a specific section for agricultural discharges but there is no specific rule for discharge of vegetable washwater. Rule 30 provides for discharge of 'on-farm waste material'. There is no definition for on-farm waste material but the rule provides for discharges that occur onto or into production land, which includes horticultural land so is the most appropriate rule in the Taranaki Plan.

Plan	Regional Freshwater Plan for Taranaki TRC - Discharges of contaminants to land and water (excluding discharges to water in the Hangatahua (Stony) River catchment)
Rule #	30
Status	Permitted
Activity	Discharge of ofal, farm rubbish, leachate from silage pits and feedlots and other on-farm waste material into or onto land excluding those materials covered by Rules 22 and 35-39
Activity standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discharge occurs onto or into production land; • Only waste generated on the subject property shall be discharged; • Discharge shall not occur within 50 m of any bore, well or spring used for water supply purposes; • Discharge shall not occur within 25 m of any surface water body; • Discharge shall not lead or be liable to lead to any contaminants entering surface water; (other standards relating to agrichemical solution and ofal pits excluded).
Activity status if permitted conditions not met	Discretionary - Rule 44 Rule 44 includes discharges of contaminants to land which are provided for in Rules 21-42 but which does not meet the standards, terms or conditions of those rule. The rule lists relevant policies that will be considered in an assessment under the rule.

Manawatu Whanganui - Horizons

The Horizons One Plan has a set of rules for commercial vegetable growing and associated discharges of specified contaminants. Vegetable washwater is not one of the specified substances so the generic discharge rules apply. The generic discharge permitted activity rules do not provide for agricultural waste or vegetable washwater so the activity is a discretionary activity and resource consent is required.

The One Plan will be amended as a result of decisions of the Environment Court on PC2. When the revised provisions are available the rule framework for vegetable washing activities will be reviewed.

Plan	Horizons One Plan for Manawatu - Whanganui Region One Plan Chapter 14: Discharges to Land and Water
Rule #	LF-LW-R38
Status	Discretionary
Activity	Discharges of water or contaminants to land or water not covered by other rules in this Plan or chapter
Activity standards	The discharge of water or contaminants into surface water pursuant to s15(1)(a) RMA or discharge of contaminants onto or into land pursuant to ss15(1)(b), 15(1)(d) or 15(2A) RMA which are not regulated by other rules in this Plan, or which do not comply with the permitted activity, controlled activity or restricted discretionary activity rules in this chapter.
Assessment criteria	Policy LF-LW-P5 sets out consent decision making criteria for discharges to land and lists the matters that the council must have regard to. Policy LF-LW-P6 Industry based standards provides for the use of industry-based standards including guidelines and codes of practice which represent best practice, and may accept

compliance with those standards as being adequate to avoid remedy or mitigate adverse effects in relationship to matters set out in LF-LW-P5.
 NOTE: This policy would provide for the Vegetable Washwater Code of Practice 2026 to be used as part of a resource consent application.

Wellington

The rules for discharges to land and water are in Section 5.2 of the Natural Resources Plan for Wellington Region. Discharge of vegetable washwater is not specifically provided for in the Plan so the general rule for Minor discharges for discharges into water or onto or into land where it may enter water applies (R91). It is a permitted activity subject to conditions, including the location of the discharge (definitions of identified areas are included in the Plan or in Schedules for outstanding water bodies, identified natural wetlands, contact recreation sites, mana whenua sites) If the permitted activity standards are not met then the activity is a discretionary activity under R94.

Plan	Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region GW - Natural Resource Plan Operative Version 2023
Rule #	R91 Minor discharges
Status	Permitted
Activity	The discharge of a contaminant into water, or onto or into land where it may enter water that is not specifically provided for by any other rule in this Plan is a permitted activity provided the following conditions are met:
Activity standards	<p>(a) the discharge is not a restricted discretionary activity, discretionary activity or non-complying activity under the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020,</p> <p>(b) the discharge does not or is not likely to result in the Drinking-Water Standards New Zealand 2005 (Revised 2018) being exceeded in a community drinking water supply protection area as shown on Map 39, Map 40, Map 41, Map 42 or Map 43, and</p> <p>(c) where the discharge is onto or into land, or onto or into land where a contaminant may enter groundwater, the discharge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) is not located within 20m of a bore used for water abstraction for potable supply or stock water, and (ii) if a point source discharge, shall not cause an adverse effect beyond the boundary of the property, and (iii) shall not result in the creation of contaminated land, and (iv) is not from, onto or into SLUR Category III land, unless the discharge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. does not come into contact with SLUR Category III land, or 2. results from the performance or exercise of Fire and Emergency New Zealand's emergency functions, duties or powers. <p>(d) where the discharge is a point source discharge and may enter a surface water body or coastal water,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the concentration of total suspended solids in the discharge shall not exceed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 50g/m³, where the discharge enters a site or habitat identified in Schedule A (outstanding water bodies), Schedule C (mana whenua), Schedule F1 (rivers/lakes), Schedule F3 (identified natural wetlands), Schedule F4 (coastal sites) or Schedule H1 (contact recreation), or 2. 100g/m³, where the discharge enters any other water, and (ii) the discharge shall not cause any erosion of the channel or banks of the receiving water body or the coastal marine area, and (iii) the discharge shall not give rise to the following effects after the zone of reasonable mixing or within a Schedule C (mana whenua) site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a change in the pH of ± 0.5 pH unit, or

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. the production of conspicuous oil or grease films, scums or foams, or floatable or suspended materials, or 3. any conspicuous change in the colour or visual clarity, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in Schedule A and Schedule F1 surface water bodies a decrease in water clarity of no more than 20%, or • in any other surface water body a decrease in water clarity of no more than 30%, or 4. a change in temperature of no more than: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2°C in river classes 1 or 2, or • 2°C in any river or lake identified as having high macroinvertebrate community health in Schedule F1 (rivers/lakes), or • 3°C in any other surface water body, and 5. any emission of objectionable odour, or 6. the fresh water is unsuitable for consumption by farm animals, or 7. any significant adverse effects on aquatic life, and <p>(iv) after the zone of reasonable mixing, the discharge shall not cause:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a value in Schedule V for the protection of 99% of species to be exceeded in a river identified in Schedule F1 (rivers/lakes) as having high macroinvertebrate community health, or 2. a value in Schedule V for the protection of 95% of species to be exceeded in any other river or lake, or coastal water.
<p>Activity status if permitted conditions not met</p>	<p>Rule R94: All other discharges – discretionary activity</p> <p>The discharge of water or contaminants into water, or onto or into land where it may enter water, that is not:</p> <p>(a) in a site or habitat identified in Schedule A (outstanding water bodies), Schedule C (mana whenua), Schedule F1 (rivers/lakes), Schedule F3 (identified natural wetlands), Schedule F4 (coastal sites) or Schedule H1 (contact recreation), and</p> <p>(b) a permitted, controlled, restricted discretionary, or non-complying activity under any other rule in the Plan, or a discretionary activity under Rules R55, R56, R58, R65, R83 or R90, is a discretionary activity.</p>

Tasman

The Tasman Resource Management Plan has a specific rule for discharge of vegetable processing wastewater.

Plan	Tasman Resource Management Plan https://eplan.tasman.govt.nz/eplan/rules/0/221/0/16071/0/30
Rule #	Rule 36.1.2.2 Discharge of Fruit or Vegetable Processing Wastewater
Status	Permitted
Activity	The discharge of up to 5 cubic metres per day of fruit or vegetable processing wastewater onto or into land, is a permitted activity that may be undertaken without a resource consent, if it complies with the following conditions
Activity standards	(a) There is no discharge or run-off of wastewater into any water body. (b) The application of wastewater is at a rate not resulting in ponding on the land surface for longer than one hour. (c) The discharge does not create an offensive or objectionable odour discernible beyond the property boundary
Activity status if permitted conditions not met	36.1.5.2 Discharge to land (Other) Except as specified by rule 36.1.6.1, any discharge to land that does not comply with the conditions of rules 36.1.2.1 to 36.1.2.11 or rule 36.1.3.1 is a discretionary activity. A resource consent is required. Consent may be refused, or conditions imposed.

Nelson

There is no permitted activity rule in the Nelson Resource Management Plan that would apply to vegetable washwater. Therefore the general discharges to land Discretionary rule will apply.

Plan	Nelson Resource Management Plan https://nelson.isoplan.co.nz/operative/rules/0/81/0/29435/0/149
Rule #	FWr.25.3 General discharges to land where it may enter water
Status	Discretionary
Activity	Any discharge that contravenes a permitted activity, and is not listed as a non-complying or prohibited activity is discretionary.
Assessment matters	FWr.25.4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. location and area of <u>discharge</u>. b. risk of contamination of surface or <u>groundwater</u>. c. the degree to which any <u>discharge</u> of <u>stormwater</u> to Council <u>stormwater</u> infrastructure does not comply with the NCC Stormwater Bylaw 2006 or section 9.3 of the NCC Land Development Manual 2010. A <u>site</u> assessment will have to be supplied when an application is made for a discretionary activity to <u>discharge stormwater</u> into the Council's <u>stormwater</u> infrastructure. <p>This assessment must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. detail of how and why the <u>stormwater discharge</u> contravenes the permitted <u>conditions</u>, and ii. a plan of the <u>site</u> layout that identifies all actual and potential sources of <u>stormwater</u> pollution, and iii. identification of <u>best practicable options</u> to ensure that actual and potential contamination of <u>stormwater</u> is minimised at source.

Marlborough

In the Marlborough Environment Plan the rules for discharge to land are in Volume 2 Chapter 3 Rural Environment. The Plan includes a permitted activity rules for discharge of agricultural liquid waste into or onto land (3.1.27) if standards are met (3.3.27). The Discretionary activity rule (3.6.1) applies if the standards are not met. Vegetable washwater would be included as an agricultural liquid waste in the definitions.

Plan	Marlborough Environment Plan (MEP) Volume 2 Ch 3 Rural Environment Operative in Part
Rule #	3.1.27
Status	Permitted
Activity	3.1.27. Discharge of agricultural liquid waste (except dairy farm effluent) into or onto land. (subject to standard 3.3.27)
Definitions	<p>Agricultural liquid waste means agricultural waste that does not exhibit the properties of a solid, e.g, it cannot be stacked and will not hold a definite angle of repose.</p> <p>Agricultural waste means the waste from the customary and generally accepted activities, practices, and procedures that producers adopt, use, or engage in during the production and preparation for market of poultry, livestock, and associated farm products; and in the production and harvesting of agricultural crops that include agronomic, horticultural, silvicultural, viticultural and aquaculture activities. In addition, winery wastewater and grape marc constitutes agricultural waste.</p> <p>Soil sensitive area means as mapped on the Soil Sensitive Area Overlay (Refer maps)</p>
Activity standards	<p>Permitted activity standard for agricultural liquid waste</p> <p>3.3.27. Discharge of agricultural liquid waste (except dairy farm effluent) into or onto land.</p> <p>3.3.27.1. The discharge must not occur into or onto a Soil Sensitive Area.</p> <p>3.3.27.2. The discharge must not occur within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) 50m of a bore unless the bore intercepts the confined layer of Riverlands FMU or the confined layer of the Wairau Aquifer FMU; (b) 20m of a river, lake, Significant Wetland, drainage channel, Drainage Channel Network or mean high water springs; (c) 10m of the boundary of any adjacent land in different ownership. <p>3.3.27.3. A high rate discharge system must not be used to discharge onto land with an average slope of 7° or greater, and the slope must not exceed 11.3° (1:5) at any point.</p> <p>3.3.27.4. The discharge must not occur when the soil moisture exceeds field capacity.</p> <p>3.3.27.5. The discharge must not result in the ponding of effluent.</p> <p>3.3.27.6. The discharge must not result in anaerobic soil conditions.</p> <p>3.3.27.7. The total cumulative nitrogen (N) loading from all discharges on the areal extent of land to be used for the discharge must not exceed 200 kg N/hectare/year (excluding N from direct animal inputs).</p> <p>3.3.27.8. The pH of the liquid waste must range between 4.5 and 9 immediately prior to discharge.</p> <p>3.3.27.9. Records of pH levels must be kept and available upon request by the Council.</p> <p>3.3.27.10. The discharge must not occur within a Groundwater Protection Area.</p>
Activity status if permitted conditions not met	3.6.1. Discretionary Activity: Any activity provided for as a Permitted Activity, Controlled Activity or Restricted Discretionary Activity that does not meet the applicable standards.

Environment Canterbury

The Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan has specific rules for commercial vegetable growing activities and the discharge of nutrients but does not specifically include vegetable washwater which may include nutrients, sediment and chemical residues. It is considered that the discharge of vegetable washwater is best managed under rules for other minor contaminant discharges as it is not classified in any of the other discharge rules. There are two rules – one relating to groundwater and the other surface water – each are included below.

Plan	Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan
Rule #	Other Minor Contaminant Discharges 5.98 (groundwater) and 5.99 (surface water)
Status	Permitted
Activity	5.98 Any discharge of water or contaminants onto or into land in circumstances where a contaminant may enter groundwater that is not classified by any of the above rules, is a permitted activity, provided the following conditions are met:
Activity standards	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The volume of the discharge does not exceed 10 m³ per day and the application rate does not exceed 10 mm per day; and 2. The discharge is not directly into groundwater; and 3. The discharge does not result in any overflow or runoff into any surface water body or onto neighboring site; and 4. The discharge does not, in groundwater, render fresh water unsuitable or unpalatable for consumption by animals or humans; and 5. The discharge does not contain any hazardous substance, hazardous waste or added radioactive isotope; and 6. The discharge does not occur when the soil moisture exceeds field capacity; and 7. The discharge is not from or into contaminated or potentially contaminated land; and 8. The discharge is not within (a) 50 m of a bore used for water abstraction; or (b) within a Community Drinking-water Protection Zone as set out in Schedule 1; and 9. Where the discharge is from the use of live ammunition associated with military training under the Defence Act 1990, conditions 1 to 8 do not apply.
Activity	5.99 Any discharge of water or contaminants into surface water or onto or into land in circumstances where it may enter surface water that is not classified by any of the above rules, is a permitted activity, provided the following conditions are met:
Activity standards	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The discharge is not from or into contaminated or potentially contaminated land; and 2. The discharge is not into a Natural State water body; and 3. The discharge meets the water quality standards in Schedule 5 after reasonable mixing with the receiving waters, in accordance with Schedule 5; and 4. The concentration of total suspended solids in the discharge shall not exceed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) 50 g/m³, where the discharge is to any Spring-fed river, Banks Peninsula river, or to a lake; or (b) 100 g/m³ where the discharge is to any other river or to an artificial watercourse; and 5. The discharge does not result in more than a 20% change in the rate of flow of the receiving surface water body; and 6. The discharge does not contain any hazardous substance, hazardous waste or added radioactive isotope.
Activity status if permitted conditions not met	5.100 Any discharge that is not permitted by either Rule 5.98 or 5.99 and is not classified by any other rule in this Plan is a discretionary activity.

West Coast

The West Coast Regional Land and Water Plan has permitted activity rules for a range of discharges to land (Rule 72-86), but none that includes vegetable washwater. Therefore, the activity is classed as a discretionary activity under Rule 91.

Plan	West Coast Regional Land and Water Plan https://www.wcrc.govt.nz/publications/regional-plans/regional-land-and-water-plan
Rule #	18.5.3 Discretionary Discharges to Land Rule 91
Status	Discretionary
Activity	Discharge to land discretionary activity Rule Unless permitted by Rules 72 to 86, or controlled by Rules 87 to 90, any discharge of contaminants into or onto land is a discretionary activity.

Otago

The Otago Regional Plan has a general discharge rule that will apply to vegetable washwater.

Plan	Regional Plan: Water for Otago https://www.orc.govt.nz/your-council/plans-and-strategies/water-plans-and-policies/regional-plan-water-for-otago/
Rule #	12.C.1.1
Status	Permitted
Activity	12.C.1.1 The discharge of water or any contaminant to water, or onto or into land in circumstances which may result in a contaminant entering water, is a permitted activity, providing:
Activity standards	<p>(a) The discharge does not result in flooding, erosion, land instability or property damage; and</p> <p>(b) There is no discharge of water from one catchment to water in another catchment; and</p> <p>(c) The discharge does not change the water level range or hydrological function of any Regionally Significant Wetland; and</p> <p>(d) When the discharge, including any discharge from a drain or water race, enters water in any lake, river, wetland or the coastal marine area; the discharge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Does not result in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) A conspicuous change in colour or visual clarity; or (2) A noticeable increase in local sedimentation, in the receiving water (refer to Figure 5); and (ii) Does not have floatable or suspended organic materials; and (iii) Does not have an odour, oil or grease film, scum or foam; and <p>(e) When the discharge enters water in any drain that goes to a lake, river, wetland, or the coastal marine area, the discharge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Does not result in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) A conspicuous change in colour or visual clarity; or (2) A noticeable increase in local sedimentation, in the lake river, wetland or the coastal marine area (refer to Figure 6); and (ii) Does not result in the production of conspicuous floatable or suspended organic materials in the drain at the first of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The downstream boundary of the landholding where the discharge occurs; or (2) Immediately before the drain enters a river, lake, wetland or the coastal marine area; and (iii) Does not have an odour, oil or grease film, scum or foam; and <p>(f) When the discharge enters water in any water race that goes to a lake, river, wetland, or the coastal marine area, the discharge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Does not result in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) A conspicuous change in colour or visual clarity; or

	<p>(2) A noticeable increase in local sedimentation, in the water race (refer to Figure 7); and</p> <p>(ii) Does not result in the production of conspicuous floatable or suspended organic materials in the race at the first of:</p> <p>(1) The downstream boundary of the landholding where the discharge occurs; or</p> <p>(2) Immediately before the race enters a river, lake, wetland or the coastal marine area; and</p> <p>(iii) Does not have an odour, oil or grease film, scum or foam.</p>
<p>Activity status if permitted conditions not met</p>	<p>12.C.2 Restricted discretionary activities: Resource consent required</p> <p>12.C.2.1 The discharge of water or any contaminant:</p> <p>(i) To water; or</p> <p>(ii) Onto or into land in circumstances which may result in a contaminant entering water, for a period up to five years, is a restricted discretionary activity, unless the discharge:</p> <p>(a) Is prohibited by a rule in 12.C.0; or</p> <p>(b) Is permitted by Rules 12.C.1.1, 12.C.1.1A or 12.C.1.2; or</p> <p>(c) Will result in flooding, erosion, land instability or property damage; or</p> <p>(d) Is of water from one catchment to water in another catchment; or</p> <p>(e) Will change the water level range or hydrological function of any Regionally Significant Wetland; or</p> <p>(f) Has previously been authorised by resource consent granted under this rule.</p> <p>The matters to which the Council has restricted the exercise of its discretion are set out in Rule 12.C.2.4. The Consent Authority is precluded from giving public notification of an application for a resource consent under this rule.</p>
<p>Matters of discretion</p>	<p>12C.2.4 Restricted discretionary activity discretions</p> <p>In considering any resource consent in terms of Rules 12.C.2.1 to 12.C.2.3, the Council will restrict the exercise of its discretion to:</p> <p>a) The nature, type, volume, frequency and location of the discharge; and</p> <p>b) The concentration and loading of contaminants in the discharge; and</p> <p>c) In the case of an application under Rules 12.C.2.1 and 12.C.2.3, the staged timeframe for achieving the permitted activity conditions in Rule 12.C.1.1; and</p> <p>d) In the case of an application under 12.C.2.2, the staged timeframe to address adverse effects on water quality; and</p> <p>e) In the case of an application previously consented under Rule 12.C.2.2, compliance with conditions of the previous resource consent; and</p> <p>f) Any change to infrastructure and the staging of implementation of those changes; and</p> <p>g) Any adverse effect on water quality, including cumulative effects, and consideration of trends in the quality of the receiving water; and</p> <p>h) Any adverse effect of the discharge on any natural or human use value, including Kāi Tahu values and use of the coastal marine area for contact recreation and seafood gathering; and</p> <p>i) The need for and extent of any mixing zone; and</p> <p>j) Any co-ordination of discharges across multiple landholdings; and</p> <p>k) The extent to which the contaminant results from the activities of the applicant; and</p> <p>l) Any effect on any Regionally Significant Wetland or on any regionally significant wetland value; and</p> <p>m) Any erosion, land instability, sedimentation or property damage resulting from the discharge; and</p> <p>n) Any financial contribution for any Regionally Significant Wetland or on any regionally significant wetland value; and</p> <p>o) The information and monitoring requirements; and</p> <p>p) The duration of the resource consent; and</p> <p>q) The review of conditions of the resource consent.</p>

Southland

The Proposed Southland Water and Land Plan has a specific permitted activity rule for horticulture washwater (Rule 36) which provides for discharge of washwater to land where contaminants may enter water. Compliance with Section 2 of the Horticulture NZ Washwater Discharge Code of Practice 2017 is a means of compliance with the rule. If compliance with the COP is not met then four other permitted conditions apply.

(Note: compliance is required to the 2017 COP even though the COP may be updated).

If the permitted activity rule is not met then the discharge is a discretionary activity under Rule 39.

The Plan divides the region into a number of physiographic zones which represents areas of the landscape with common attributes that influence water quality, such as climate, topography, geology and soil type. Zones differ in the way sediment, microbes and nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus accumulate and are transferred through the soil, aquifers and into water bodies. There are policies for each physiographic zone which would need to be considered if resource consent is required.

Plan	Southland Water and Land Plan (Operative in part) https://www.es.govt.nz/repository/libraries/id:26gi9ayo517q9stt81sd/hierarchy/about-us/plans-and-strategies/regional-plans/proposed-southland-water-and-land-plan/documents/pSWLP%20-%20Clean%20version%20following%209th%20Interim%20Decision%20PDF%20CURRENT.pdf
Rule #	Rule 36 - Horticulture wash-water
Status	Permitted
Activity	Rule 36 - Horticulture wash-water (a) The discharge of water containing contaminants from vegetable or bulb washing to land where contaminants may enter water is a permitted activity, provided that the following conditions are met:
Activity standards	(i) either the discharge complies with Section 2 "Good Practices" of the Horticulture NZ Washwater Discharge Code of Practice 2017; or (ii) the discharge does not exceed 20 cubic metres per day; (iii) there is no overland flow; or ponding for more than 24 hours of horticultural washwater, or application of the washwater to land when soil moisture exceeds field capacity; (iv) the discharge only contains water, soil, or HSNO approved sanitisers that are used in accordance with their label instructions and comply with NZS 8409:2004 Management of Agrichemicals; and (v) the discharge is not within: (1) 20 metres of a lake, river, artificial watercourse, modified watercourse, natural wetland or the coastal marine area; or (2) 20 metres of any landholding boundary; or (3) 100 metres of any residential dwelling; or (4) the microbial health protection zone of a drinking water supply site identified in Appendix J, or where no such zone is identified, then within 250 metres of the abstraction point of a drinking water supply site identified in Appendix J.
Activity status if permitted conditions not met	Discretionary Activity Rule 39 - Other agricultural effluent disposal The discharge of agricultural effluent, water containing contaminants from vegetable or bulb washing sludge, stationary agricultural dips, mobile sheep dips and spray dips onto or into land, in circumstances where contaminants may enter water, other than as provided for in Rules 32A to 38 is discretionary activity.