

POSSUM MONITORING - CONTRACT PERFORMANCE ISSUES

POLICY AND STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Policy and procedures for dealing with contract performance issues under the NPCA Possum Monitoring Operator Accreditation Scheme

Approved by the National Possum Control Agencies (NPCA) Management Committee

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and standard operating procedure (SOP) is to deal with issues of contract monitoring where performance fails to meet required standards.

The policy is a quality assurance measure to ensure that the standards and integrity of the NPCA Possum Monitoring Operator Accreditation Scheme are maintained.

Those affected

This policy affects:

- Approved operators accredited under the NPCA Possum Monitoring Operator Accreditation Scheme;
- Individuals or companies who undertake possum monitoring work either as contractors or employees;
- Possum control agencies who contract accredited operators to undertake possum monitoring work.

Policy

1. *Power to revoke accreditation*

The policy enables the NPCA to suspend or revoke the accreditation of an accredited possum monitor where NPCA has reasonable grounds to believe that the monitor has, in the performance of a possum monitoring contract, seriously failed to meet possum monitoring standards or has behaved in a fraudulent manner, and is no longer suitable to retain accreditation. Serious breaches would include any instance of fraud or dishonesty that alters the outcome of a monitor result.

It should be noted that contract performance issues of a less serious nature will normally be dealt with through the contract management process at the local level, without requiring recourse to NPCA. For instance, it is expected that a single instance of failure to start on time or finish within the timeframe allowed would be

resolved by a remedy agreed between the parties to the contract, including any steps necessary to avoid future reoccurrence.

2. Standards

Standards for monitoring work with which monitors are expected to comply under this policy are set out in the following documents:

- Best practice standard, *Protocol for Possum Population Monitoring Using the Trap-Catch Method* - see Code A1, Publications section at: www.npca.org.nz/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=34&Itemid=38
- Best practice standard, *Protocol for Possum Population Monitoring Using the WaxTag Method*, - see Code A2, Publications section at: www.npca.org.nz/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=34&Itemid=38
- Performance standards, specified in the each monitoring contract.

All accredited monitors are made aware of the minimum monitoring standards and the ability of NPCA to suspend or revoke accreditations through:

- Letters from NPCA confirming new accreditation or renewed accreditation, and
- The Possum Population Monitoring Accreditation Renewal Application - see Accreditation section at: www.npca.org.nz/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=8&Itemid=50

3. NPCA responsibility

The NPCA Management Committee is responsible for:

- (a) ensuring the procedures are followed once a complaint under this policy has been received, and
- (b) making decisions under this policy.

Suspension or revocation of accreditation is a serious matter as it will prevent the affected monitoring operator from undertaking monitoring contract work anywhere in New Zealand. Such a decision will be made only after thorough investigation and careful consideration of the circumstances.

4. Who should make complaints under this policy and when

Formal complaints should be made under this policy:

- by agencies, individuals and contracting companies who manage possum monitoring contracts with accredited monitors
- control contractors
- when a serious breach of contract, including dishonesty and substandard performance, appears to have occurred.

Failure to notify NPCA of such suspected breaches of contract potentially undermines NPCA's ability to take action and maintain the standards of the Accreditation Scheme.

5. *Natural justice*

In accordance with the principles of natural justice, NPCA will ensure that, when a complaint has been received in respect of an accredited monitor, the monitor will have the opportunity to respond to the matters raised in the complaint and to appeal a decision made under this policy, as per the procedure set out below.

Procedure

1. Complainant sends written complaint to the NPCA Management Committee, with details to substantiate the claimed misconduct or failure to meet performance standards, and sends a copy of the complaint to the relevant monitor.
 2. NPCA invites the monitor to respond, in writing or in person, within 10 working days of the complaint being received at NPCA.
 3. NPCA Management Committee considers the facts and makes a decision to either:
 - a) suspend accreditation, subject to stipulated conditions (e.g. period of suspension, requirements before re-accreditation would be considered); or
 - b) revoke accreditation permanently; or
 - c) reaffirm the existing accreditation.
 4. NPCA notifies in writing both the complainant and the affected monitor of the decision, including notification of the 20-working-day period within which the decision can be appealed.
 5. Should no appeal be received within the appeal period, NPCA will implement the decision.
 6. In the event of the decision being appealed, the NPCA would consider the new information contained in the appeal and make a determination.
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