

Trenching or excavating near waterways?



Health warning:

Toxic gases may be released when sediments are disturbed.

The damp areas around waterways (eg. sediments of Lake Alexandrina) may produce hazardous chemicals, including methane gas.

Substantial volumes of asphyxiating gases may be released into the immediate surroundings during earth works in and around damp areas and sediments.

Methane gas has no odour, colour or taste and if inhaled in large quantities may cause serious harm and death.

Asphyxiating gases are often heavier than air and can accumulate to potentially harmful levels in freshly disturbed areas, be aware when conducting earth works.

If you are planning to conduct earth work in damp areas around waterways you should take the following precautions:

- > **Never** excavate alone
- > Always make sure you have reliable means of communication in case of emergency
- > Look out for the early signs of poisoning (headache, rapid breathing, fatigue, reduced coordination, nausea, dizziness, drowsiness, disorientation and confusion)
- > Evacuate the affected area
- > If asphyxiating gases are inhaled, leave the site immediately, move to an area with fresh air and seek medical advice. Call 000 or 112 from mobiles if required.

For more information

SA Health

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For information on trenching and excavation safety, visit www.safework.sa.gov.au