

A QUICK GUIDE TO

OUR FEES AND CHARGES

ERMA New Zealand's Quick Guides series is designed to give you a simplified and user friendly guide to our operations

INTRODUCTION

We've written this guide to our fees to help people who may be working with us under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO). It is part of our Quick Guide series.

Our aim is to provide a series of quick, practical guides to our operations, including the application process and other – often complex – aspects of our business. We want the Quick Guides to provide a straightforward outline of the whole ERMA New Zealand process: who we are, what we are here to do, and how we can help you.

So check this guide whenever you need some information on our fees and charges. It is designed to help you.

You can get more information by telephoning, writing to, or calling in at our Wellington office. Or visit our website at: www.ermanz.govt.nz

If you have any suggestions for improvements to these guides (or any of our other publications), please contact our communications staff at:

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IN A NUTSHELL

After the Government set up ERMA New Zealand it asked us to recover the costs of providing our services to organisations and individuals. This is called cost recovery. It mainly affects people making an application to us for a new organism or hazardous substance. But it also applies to some of our other services such as setting up delegations to other institutions and approving test certifiers.

Cost recovery only applies to services of this type. Many of the functions we carry out are funded directly by the Crown and this accounts for the majority of our total funding. These other functions include policy advice, international work and the transfer of substances.

If you are an applicant you can expect to pay a part of the actual costs of processing your application. This means if your application is relatively straightforward our charges will reflect this. On the other hand, if your application is more complicated and we need to do more review and analysis work, the fee will be higher.

The Government currently subsidises the costs of processing applications; this subsidy focuses on the costs of public participation in the HSNO process. It is up to the Government to decide whether to continue to make these funds available.

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ENVIRONMENTAL RISK MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY
NGĀ KAIWHAKATŪPATO WHAKARARU TAIAO



WHAT AM I PAYING FOR?

The main direct cost is the cost of time – time spent by staff, Ngā Kaihautū (our Māori advisory committee) and by the Authority itself. Another direct cost is that of any consultants or outside contractors who are brought in to help review or consider your application. It includes the cost of:

- reviewing and evaluating your application
- gathering any extra information
- making a decision on your application
- ERMA New Zealand staff time spent with you before you lodge your application

The total costs also include a share of overheads ie the cost of the infrastructure we have had to establish including accommodation, the computer system and support staff. These costs will become lower for each application as the number of applications we deal with builds up.

There are some fixed fees in our pricing structure, but generally only where we expect the cost to be reasonably predictable.

HOW MUCH DO I HAVE TO PAY?

The general principle is that we charge what it costs. The actual charge will vary from application to application – so if it costs more than usual to deal with an application, the fee for dealing with it will be higher.

We have published a separate schedule of fees and charges, which is updated when we review the level of fees. We'll do this at least once a year. If you don't have a copy of the schedule with this guide please call us and we'll be happy to send you one, or check on our website at www.ermanz.govt.nz for the latest version.

Our experience so far is that the costs vary considerably from case to case so it is not possible to fix standard costs for applications. At any time our staff will be able to estimate how long a particular application will take to process and how much it is likely to cost.

This guide explains how our set fees and charges will be applied in calculating or estimating the total fee (or price) for dealing with an application or providing a service. We have a separate information sheet available that sets out our current best estimates for dealing with different types of application. This is because this information may change as we gain more experience and have better information to work from.

ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY

The Government subsidy is applied in two general ways:

- 1) As a subsidy over our charge-out rate. This part of the subsidy thus applies to all applications.
- 2) As a contribution to the Authority's costs of facilitating public participation. The contribution will meet the normal costs of publicly notifying applications, handling submissions and conducting a hearing.

There may also be some applications which are zero priced ie are fully subsidised. Check the *Schedule of Fees and Charges* for details.

HOW TO KEEP OUR COSTS (AND YOUR CHARGES) DOWN

To keep your charges to a minimum you should:

- Provide a complete application with appropriate supporting information and references.
- Check with us before lodging your application so we can advise you what should be included.
- Identify and address the risks, costs and benefits associated with your application.
- Identify and address relevant issues when preparing your application. For example, where Maori issues are involved, develop an understanding with your local hapu or iwi.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Grouping applications

A single new organism application can cover a group of new organisms as long as there is a significant degree of commonality within the group, eg several varieties of one species with different genetic constructs inserted, or different plants being tested for specificity to the same host. It is up to ERMA New Zealand's chief executive to decide how widely this provision should apply in particular cases.

A hazardous substance application may cover any number of substances, or a substance defined to include ranges rather than point concentrations of particular components, provided that the risks presented by the substances can be easily assessed. Again, it is up to the chief executive to decide on individual cases.

In general we'll try to minimise the costs for applicants. We think about whether a combined application will be easier or more difficult to deal with than separate applications.

Pre-application costs

You will be charged for pre-application discussions with ERMA New Zealand staff once you have formally lodged your application. We'll let you know when we start recording. If you don't lodge an application, we won't charge you for these discussions unless the application is revived within one year.

Estimating cost

We'll also give you an estimate, on request, of how much your application is likely to cost. This is on a 'best endeavours' basis and final amount will depend on how long it has taken to assess and make a decision on the application. We can give you regular updates and estimates as your application goes along.

Information sheets are also available which give estimated prices (cost to the applicant) for different types and levels of application.

Instalments

Where variable charges apply, a first instalment must be paid before we formally accept your application. Any Crown subsidy or other rebates will be applied to the invoice for the second instalment or the final payment, whichever is sooner. Where there is a fixed fee, the whole of the fee must be paid when the application is lodged.

For time-based charges the Authority will periodically invoice you with an estimate of the outstanding cost of dealing with the application, and may ask you to make this payment before the processing continues. This may happen more than once depending on the complexity of the application. These additional instalments cover anticipated costs for no more than the next 30 days. When the actual final cost is known we'll send you a final invoice or a refund.

Please note that applications are charged for whether they are approved or declined.

Rapid assessments

If an application for rapid assessment is declined and you decide to make a full application, any 'unused' portion of payments already made will be credited against the cost of the full assessment.

Chief executive-initiated applications

If ERMA New Zealand's Chief Executive is the applicant, then the Authority itself will meet all the costs. This may happen for some reassessment applications and where there are public good or public interest reasons for doing this.

Withdrawing applications

If you decide to withdraw your application, you'll need to let us know in writing and pay for the costs you have already incurred. We'll send you an invoice for any outstanding fees or give you a refund for any excess.

Unpaid fees

If you haven't paid your fees one month after the date of our invoice, we won't be able to continue processing your application until the fees are paid.

NEED MORE HELP?

If you have any questions about our fees, which haven't been answered in this guide please get in touch. Our contact details are on the front of this guide.

