



STACS of NEWS

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NEW ENVIRONMENT AGENCY RULES FOR CLEARING WATER OFF SITES

In February the Environment Agency published a new Regulatory Policy Statement (RPS) entitled *TEMPORARY DEWATERING OF EXCAVATIONS TO SURFACE WATER*, which potentially has major implications for the disposal of water from sites.

The statement sets out the circumstances under which water can be discharged off site without the need of a Bespoke Discharge Permit from the Environment Agency.

DEWATERING GUIDANCE EXPLAINED

You usually need an environmental permit if you discharge liquid or waste water into surface water.

Liquid or waste water includes:

- poisonous, noxious or polluting matter
- waste matter
- trade effluent
- sewage effluent
- contaminated surface water

Surface water includes:

- rivers
- streams
- estuaries
- lakes
- canals
- coastal waters

However, you do not currently need to apply for a permit if you:

- have a short term, temporary discharge of uncontaminated water which is wholly or mainly rainwater, from an excavation to surface water (such as pumping water out of excavations on a building site)
- comply with all the conditions in this regulatory position statement (RPS)

You need to apply for a bespoke permit if:

- your water discharge is from pumping out contaminated groundwater or water from contaminated land so it can be treated
- your water discharge is from quarry activities
- you cannot comply with the conditions in this RPS



CONDITIONS YOU MUST COMPLY WITH

The discharge must:

- be clean water, for example clear rainwater or infiltrated groundwater which has collected in the bottom of temporary excavations
- not result in water containing fine or coarse suspended solids (silty water) entering surface water
- not last more than 3 consecutive months (the activity may stop and restart but the clock does not restart) - if the activity is likely to go over 3 consecutive months then you need to [apply for a permit](#)
- be made to surface water, such as a river, stream or the sea
- have a method statement that minimises the risk of pollution

The discharge must not:

- pollute surface water
- contain any chemical dosing agents, flocculants or coagulants
- be from a site which is contaminated by oil, metals, hydrocarbons, solvents or pesticides or other polluting substances
- result in the spread of non-native invasive species, parasites or disease
- cause flooding from surface water
- cause erosion of the banks or bed of the receiving watercourse
- contain concrete wash water even if it has been treated
- contain site drainage from surface areas such as haul roads, storage or working areas
- be from a site with naturally elevated concentrations of substances which exceed environmental quality standards

Before starting work on site you must:

- plan how to minimise the level of contaminants such as silt entering the excavation
- plan how to dispose of water that enters the excavation
- plan not to use machinery in excavations while dewatering is taking place
- minimise water entering the excavation, for example from rainfall, runoff, groundwater ingress or high water table
- consider using sustainable urban drainage construction methods

The discharge must not be located within, or less than 500 metres upstream of:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
- candidate SACs, possible SACs, potential SPAs and sites of community importance
- internationally designated Ramsar sites
- other nature conservation sites, such as ancient woodlands, local and national nature reserves
- local wildlife sites

WORKER SUFFERS BRAIN INJURY IN FALL FROM HEIGHT

The principal contractor (PC) involved in the construction of a dormer extension has today been sentenced for safety breaches after a self-employed worker suffered life threatening injuries.

The court heard how the operative was working on the roof at the side of the dormer when he fell approximately eight metres on to a paved floor. Adverse weather meant there was a need to make the dormer extension water tight which involved working in the unprotected area of the roof.

His fall was broken by a plastic children's playhouse. The worker suffered a traumatic brain injury, bruising, and damage to his left arm.

An investigation by the HSE found the scaffolding erected on the site did not extend fully across the intended area of works and did not provide a protective area along the edge under where the operative was working. The principal contractor, failed to ensure suitable and sufficient measures were in place to prevent persons falling a distance liable to cause personal injury.

The PC pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(2) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and has received an eight-month sentence suspended for 2 years along with a compensation order for £5000 and ordered to pay £2000 in costs

After the hearing, HSE inspector Paul Thompson commented: "Work at height, such as roof work, is a high-risk activity that accounts for a high proportion of workplace serious injuries and fatalities each year.

"In this case, by putting in place measures to prevent falls from the roof edge by providing a scaffold platform under the area of works, could have removed the danger of falling."

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