

SEPA calls on construction industry to be aware of new licensing requirements

📅 27 August 2018

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is urging the construction industry to ensure they have a licence and Pollution Prevention Plan before starting any new large construction projects from 1 September 2018.

- From 1 September 2018 all new large construction projects must have a licence and Pollution Prevention Plan.
- SEPA has been engaging with the construction industry to ensure they are aware of the changes to drainage system regulations.
- Further guidance is available from SEPA's website to ensure construction activities are compliant with the regulations.

A licence will be required, before any construction work can commence for sites that:

- exceed 4 hectares in area;
- contain a road or track length in excess of 5km; or
- include any area of more than 1 hectare or any length of more than 500 metres on ground with a slope in excess of 25 degrees.

SEPA has produced [guidance](#) for the construction industry to help with the development of a pollution prevention plan which will be required before any work commences. This plan must be complied with onsite during the entire construction phase.

All discharges of water run-off from construction sites to the water environment are regulated, and the changes apply to a wide range of construction types, including house and industrial building, wind farms, forestry, transport, pipe laying, overhead pylons and hydro power schemes.

David Harley, Head of Water and Planning at SEPA, said:

Every day SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland's environment and the changes to the regulations have been introduced to reduce the risks of pollution to the water environment from construction site water run-off.

"The changes will ensure adequate treatment systems are in place to protect the environment prior to and during the construction phase. For example, this will reduce the risk of silty water run-off which can damage and kill aquatic life by smothering and suffocating.

"We are clear that compliance is non-negotiable and have been engaging with the construction sector to ensure they are aware of

the changes coming into force. If you're responsible for the operation of a construction site please contact your [local SEPA office](#) as soon as possible, so that we can work with you to ensure that the correct authorisations are in place."

Ends

Further information

- The amendments to the Controlled Activity Regulations (CAR) introduced a threshold to General Binding Rule (GBR) 10 for when a construction site SUDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) licence will be required.
- Even if you do not need to apply for authorisation, companies are reminded that they are still required to operate the site in accordance with the general binding rules specified in the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011, as amended (CAR). Details of these rules can be found in the [CAR practical guide](#).

[Press release: Cruel electric shock collars for pets to be banned](#)

Cruel electronic training collars which are used for dogs and cats are to be banned under new legislation, the Government has announced today.

Remote controlled electronic training collars (e-collars) have a remote device that triggers an electronic pulse, which can be varied in strength, while others may spray a noxious chemical. As well as being misused to inflict unnecessary harm and suffering, there's also evidence e-collars can re-direct aggression or generate anxiety-based behaviour in pets – making underlying behavioural and health problems worse.

The action follows a public consultation on a proposed ban for all e-collars.

However, after listening closely to the views of pet owners and respondents, the Government will not extend the ban to invisible fencing systems which can keep pets away from roads and potential traffic accidents. These devices are particularly useful for cat owners and animals often respond well to invisible fencing and quickly learn to stay within a boundary without receiving a static pulse.

Secretary of State Michael Gove said:

We are a nation of animal lovers and the use of punitive shock collars cause harm and suffering to our pets.

This ban will improve the welfare of animals and I urge pet owners to instead use positive reward training methods.

The consultation attracted over 7,000 responses. Around 50% of respondents specifically pointed out that they did not want containment fences banned.

A considerable number of responses, whether supportive of a total ban or supportive of invisible fencing, also expressed concern at the number of people who use the hand-held devices incorrectly and without proper training.

For further information please see the Government's [full response](#) to the consultation.

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Guidance: Plant or machinery capital allowances

The Energy Technology List comprises the technologies that qualify for the UK government's energy-saving Enhanced Capital Allowance (ECA) scheme and their energy-saving eligibility criteria.

See the [Energy Technology Product List](#) for the eligible products in this category, listed by brand name.

Press release: Bathing water investigation continues

Investigations are continuing into the bathing water quality of a popular North East beach.

Cullercoats in North Tyneside is currently rated as 'sufficient', meaning it has passed bathing water quality standards. But work to understand the reasons for its decline in quality from 'good' are ongoing.

On Wednesday (22 August) Environment Agency Chief Executive Sir James Bevan visited the bay to hear about the work being done by the agency and its partners at Northumbrian Water and North Tyneside Council to investigate and understand the issues.

A number of factors can impact on bathing water quality, including the impact of humans, animals and birds, misconnections of pipes going into the sea, and heavy rainfall, which can result in run off from the land going into the sea and causing a temporary drop in seawater quality.

During recent years, the Environment Agency has seen that bathing water

quality at Cullercoats deteriorates towards the end of the season. A partnership working group was set up in 2017 to investigate the issues and work has continued throughout this year.

The Environment Agency is carrying out additional monitoring at suspected sources of pollution and further microbial source tracking (MST) which through DNA analysis identifies the sources of bacteria predominantly present in the seawater.

Northumbrian Water is carrying out extensive investigations on the drainage network and is working with partners to resolve any issues found. This has involved checking a previously blocked up culvert owned by North Tyneside Council that was identified as having discharged poor quality water to the beach in 2011. The working group is also investigating potential misconnections from properties discharging into the surface water outlets rather than the sewer.



The Environment Agency's Mick Donkin collecting samples at Cullercoats

'Drastic improvements

The Environment Agency's Gordon Reid, who leads on the Environment Agency's activity in the North East, said:

The North East remains a beacon for bathing water excellence with a real success story of drastic improvements over the past 30 years. In 1988, nearly half of our bathing waters failed to meet mandatory standards, while in the most recent assessment they all passed.

We'd encourage people to make the most of our wonderful coastline by getting out and enjoying it!

We work closely with our partners at local authorities and Northumbrian Water to understand what impacts on a particular bathing water's quality and then carry out work to try to improve it, and such work has already taken place here at Cullercoats.

We remain committed to identifying all sources of pollution and a number of investigations are taking place to understand the type of bacteria in the water and where it is potentially coming from. It's important to note that 'sufficient' status still means the bathing water has passed water quality standards.



Partnership working is important

All of the North East's Bathing Waters passed water quality standards in the most recent assessment at the end of last year with 32 out of 34 being rated excellent or good and 2 being rated sufficient.

Compliance is based on the current and previous four years of sample data (a maximum of 80 samples per beach, from 2014 to 2017). The samples are taken by the Environment Agency between May and September each year to assess the bathing waters against the strict regulations.

Northumbrian Water's wastewater director, Richard Warneford, said:

Looking after the environment is at the heart of what we do. We are extremely proud of the contribution we have made to protect and improve our region's stunning coastline through both investment and partnership working and we appreciate the significant impact that beaches have on tourism, the economy and the leisure industry.

Partnership working is particularly important in understanding the issues affecting bathing water quality and to provide the improvements needed".

Across the UK 98.3% of bathing waters tested at over 400 beaches and lakes passed tough water quality standards. Action plans are in place for all bathing waters in need of improvement.

The public have a key role to play in ensuring their local beaches are clean. They can do their bit by ensuring they #binit4beaches and take their litter home with them.

You can check for temporary warnings against bathing, or see the sampling results [online](#)

[Read Mick Donkin's blog on his role as Sampling and Collection Team Leader in the north east and his love of the north easts coast!](#)