

Press release: New river forecasts for North East communities

A new service which allows people to get forecasts for river levels to help them plan for flooding is available for two locations in the North East.

It is being provided by the Environment Agency on the gov.uk website for the River Tyne at Hexham, Northumberland, and Lustrum Beck at Stockton-on-Tees.

All communities can see observed data for river levels for the past five days. Now people living in these two areas can also see their future flood risk in a 36-hour river level forecast.

The aim is to help communities be more aware of their flood risk and be able to plan for potential flooding incidents. The new river forecasts are calculated by computer models that take into account data like current flows and expected rainfall.

Forecast information can change quickly so people are still advised to sign up for the Environment Agency's free flood warning service to ensure they are notified if a warning is issued for their community.

And residents and businesses can still get the most up-to-date and accurate situation from the [live online map](#) which updates every 15 minutes and details the current Severe Flood Warnings, Flood Warnings and Alerts in place.

Help residents manage flood risk

Phil Taylor, from the Environment Agency's Flood Resilience Team in the North East, said:

We are always looking at ways to use technology to better share information with people, and residents have told us that they would find it really useful to see these forecasts to help them manage their flood risk.

We want people to know if they are at risk of flooding, be prepared, and take action to protect themselves and their families. A wealth of information is available on our website for people to find out if they are at risk and understand how to prepare.

Everything residents and businesses need to know about how to check their risk and prepare for flooding is online on the [Floods Destroy website](#).

The new 36-hour river forecasting for Hexham and Stockton can be found online at:

[Lustrum Beck, Stockton-On-Tees](#)

and

[River Tyne at Hexham](#)

The plan is to continue to refine the service based on feedback from users before rolling it out to other areas in the future.

People who live in areas where the 36-hour forecast is not available can still view data on river levels from the previous five days.

[**A new kind of university**](#)

SRUC will become a new, 21st Century university.

[**New mobile sensory lab hits the road**](#)

SRUC's new mobile sensory lab, which will allow consumers around the UK to play an important role in livestock genetics, was officially unveiled this week.

[**A day in the life of the Langhill Dairy Herd**](#)

SRUC has recently celebrated winning the Queen's Anniversary prize for Higher Education.

[**Detailed guide: Environment Agency fees and charges**](#)

Environment Agency charges

You may have to pay an Environment Agency charge to cover the costs of regulating your activity. The amount you pay depends on the activity you carry out and the regulations that apply to you.

The Environment Agency consults with customers before making any changes to their charges. Environment Agency charges are approved by government ministers.

Changes to Environment Agency charging

The Environment Agency recently reviewed many of their charges. They consulted with customers between 29 November 2017 and 26 January 2018 on their proposed new charges.

As a result of the review, charges for these regulatory regimes will change:

- Environmental Permitting
- Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH)
- EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS)
- Producer Responsibility for Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)
- Water Resources

Charges for other regulatory regimes were not included in the review and these have not changed.

As part of the consultation, the Environment Agency also asked for customers' views on the future of:

- navigation services charges
- the water abstraction licence charging system

They will use the comments received to help develop their thinking on future charges for these regulatory regimes.

The [consultation response document](#) explains how the Environment Agency addressed customer comments when setting their new charges.

Environmental permitting – new supplementary charges

A significant change for Environmental permitting is that the Environment Agency has introduced extra (supplementary) charges that some customers will need to pay on top of the fixed application and annual subsistence charges.

These supplementary charges will only apply if the Environment Agency needs to do extra or unusual regulatory work. This could either be when determining a permit application or after a permit has been issued.

Charges for this extra work will either be a fixed cost or calculated on a time and materials basis.

You will pay a fixed cost supplementary charge when extra work is needed to support a permit application. For example, at some sites the Environment Agency will need to assess an odour management plan, or for intensive farming installations, a dust and bio-aerosols management plan.

Operators with a waste transfer or treatment permit will pay a fixed cost supplementary charge in the first year of operations.

You will pay time and materials supplementary charges when it is hard to predict the amount of work the Environment Agency will need to do. This is so the hourly costs of the officers and equipment involved can be recovered in full.

Time and materials supplementary charges will apply in these cases, where extra work is needed to:

- determine a permit application – for example, for sites of high public interest
- bring a site with a permit back into compliance after an unplanned event – such as a pollution incident or issuing a suspension notice
- assess or approve information submitted by the operator to meet a condition in their permit – for example if you need to produce an odour management plan or fire prevention plan after your permit has been issued

You can find more information about time and materials charges in the [guidance to EPR charges](#).

Flood risk activities changes

The Environment Agency has introduced different categories of charges for flood risk activities. The new charges will still be fixed costs, but there will be higher charges according to an activity's risk category. If you need help understanding your charge, contact your local team.

Phone: 03708 506 506

Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Changes to optional advice services

The Environment Agency also reviewed charges for their optional advice services. As a result, they will be changing or introducing charges for:

- planning advice
- marine licensing advice
- definition of waste opinions

When charges will change

Most of the new charges will apply from 1 April 2018.

The new charges for the WEEE scheme will apply for the 2019 compliance period, starting on 1 January 2019.

Specific supplementary charges for Environmental permitting will be introduced from 1 October 2018, these are:

- application charges for sites of high public interest
- time and materials charging after a pollution incident and for assessing information submitted to meet a permit condition

You can find the new and current charging schemes using the links in the following sections.

Abstraction charges

The Environment Agency is making one change to abstraction charges as a result of the review. The River Alre is being removed from the list of supported sources.

The Environmental Improvement Unit Charge rate for the Thames regional charging area is also changing. The Environment Agency consulted on this change before the review.

You can find details of these changes in the [new Abstraction Charging Scheme](#) which will apply from 1 April 2018.

Until 31 March 2018 the current [Abstraction Charging Scheme and subsistence calculator](#) still applies.

Climate change agreement charges

Climate change agreement charges are not changing as a result of the recent review of charges. [See details of the current charges](#).

COMAH charges

The hourly rate charged for work related to COMAH sites will be increased to £161 an hour. The previous rate had not changed for a number of years. An increase is needed so the Environment Agency can move closer towards full cost recovery for this work.

The Environment Agency will also introduce new charges to recover the costs of their work exercising external emergency plans. These charges will be passed on to operators through their local authority. The charge will be £84 an hour.

CRC charges

CRC charges are not changing as a result of the recent review of charges. [See details of the current charges](#).

Definition of waste service charges

The Environment Agency are introducing a new discretionary service providing formal definition of waste opinions. Customers will pay an initial fee of £750 when they submit a request for a definition of waste opinion – equivalent to 6 hours work at £125 an hour. This is the minimum amount of time needed to complete an initial review. The Environment Agency will then provide a cost estimate of further work needed to complete a full technical and legal assessment.

The Environment Agency anticipates this service will become fully available during June 2018.

Find out more about the [Definition of waste service](#).

Environmental permitting charges

Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR) charges will change as a result of the review. The following information provides full details of these changes.

- new [Environmental permitting charges guidance](#)
- new [Environmental Permitting Charging Scheme](#) – applies from 1 April 2018
- new [Environmental permitting tables of charges](#) – fixed application charges and subsistence charges – applies from 1 April 2018

Until 31 March 2018 the current [Environmental Permitting Charging Scheme](#) still applies.

EU ETS charges

Some EU ETS charges will change as a result of the review. You can find details of these changes in the [new EU ETS Charging Scheme](#) which will apply from 1 April 2018.

Until 31 March 2018 the current [EU ETS Charging Scheme](#) still applies.

Fisheries charges

Fisheries charges are not changing as a result of the recent review of charges. See details of the current charges for:

- buying a [rod fishing licence](#)
- getting permission to [trap crayfish, eels, elvers, salmon and sea trout](#)

Marine licensing advice charges

The Environment Agency will introduce a new discretionary service providing marine licensing advice. This will be the same approach they currently take for planning application advice.

They will offer a free preliminary opinion. The charge for further technical advice will be offered as a discretionary service, at £100 an hour.

These charges will be introduced from 1 April 2018.

Planning applications advice

Charges for the Environment Agency's optional planning advice service will change to £100 an hour from 1 April 2018.

Until 31 March 2018, the current [terms and conditions and charge](#) for planning advice still applies.

Waste charges – non EPR

WEEE charges will change as a result of the review. You can find details of these changes in the new [Waste \(Miscellaneous\) Charging Scheme](#).

The new charges apply for the 2019 compliance period starting on 1 January 2019.

The existing WEEE charges still apply to the 2018 compliance period, see:

- apply for [approval as a compliance scheme](#)
- apply to become an [approved authorised treatment facility](#)
- apply to become an [approved exporter](#)

Charges for other non EPR waste activities will not be changing. These are also now included in the new Waste (Miscellaneous) Charging Scheme.

Waterways (navigation) charges

Navigation charges are not changing as a result of the review. For details of current charges, see:

- [boat registration refunding or transferring your registration](#)
- [Anglian waterways registration charges](#)
- [Lydney Harbour information for boaters](#)
- [River Medway registration charges](#)
- [Rye Harbour navigation charges](#)
- [Rye Harbour charges for visiting boats](#)
- [River Thames boat registration charges](#)
- [River Thames mooring charges](#)

When you need to pay Environment Agency charges

When you send an application to the Environment Agency you need to pay the application charge when you apply. For example this could be an application:

- for a new permit, licence or registration
- to vary or surrender an existing permit

For annual subsistence charges, or other supplementary charges (fixed cost or calculated on a time and materials basis), the Environment Agency will send you an invoice. You must pay the invoice straight away unless the Environment Agency has agreed you can spread payment, for example by Direct Debit. Most annual invoices are sent out in April each year.

However, the Environment Agency will send out the 2018/19 annual subsistence charge invoices during May or June of 2018. Invoices will be delayed because the Environment Agency is developing a new billing system. This will affect customers with environmental permits for:

- waste
- installations
- water discharge activities and groundwater activities

Time and materials charges are invoiced in arrears.

How to pay Environment Agency charges

You can pay in a number of different ways, by:

- direct debit – preferred method
- electronic bank transfer
- card – except American Express
- cheque

If you have received an invoice it will include details of how to pay. A Direct Debit mandate will also be included so you can set up payment using this method.

If you are making an application, the guidance to the form will tell you how you can pay.

Include an Environment Agency reference number or permit number with your payment. This will make sure your payment can be identified and matched to your application or invoice.

If you want to pay by electronic bank transfer you must use the correct unique reference number. You'll find details of which reference number to use in the guidance that explains how to apply for a particular permit or licence.

VAT

VAT does not apply to charges for environmental permits and licences.

The Environment Agency does charge VAT on some of the optional services they offer. Where VAT does apply, it will be shown next to the charge on your invoice.

Customer purchase orders

The Environment Agency does not accept purchase orders from customers and will not quote purchase order numbers on their invoices. You will need to find an alternative way of processing your payment if you normally rely on the use of a purchase order number to release a payment.

Contact the Environment Agency

For general enquiries about Environment Agency charges, please email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

For enquiries about invoices please contact the address on the back of the invoice.

For more complex queries about understanding how the Environment Agency has worked out a particular charge, please email: eacharges_query@environment-agency.gov.uk