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**Coronavirus (COVID-19):
what you need to do**

Stay at home

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

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Environment
Agency

Guidance

COVID-19 and spreading slurry or milk on land, or storing slurry: RPS C12

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This COVID-19 regulatory position statement (RPS) only applies if you cannot comply with regulatory requirements for

landspreading slurry or milk, or storing slurry, as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions.

If you landspread slurry or milk produced on a farm you must normally comply with certain regulatory requirements. These requirements aim to make sure that you do not apply nutrients to land in a way that:

- exceeds the needs of the soil and crop
- creates a risk of point source or diffuse pollution to surface water or groundwater

If you comply with the conditions in this COVID-19RPS you can spread slurry or milk on agricultural land, or store slurry, without meeting normal regulatory requirements.

You must get [written agreement from the Environment Agency](#) before you use this COVID-19 RPS.

When this COVID-19 RPS applies

This COVID-19 RPS only applies if you cannot comply with regulatory requirements for landspreading slurry or milk, or storing slurry, due to the impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19). For example, if your supply chain is disrupted due to coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions.

In these circumstances, and provided you meet the conditions in this COVID-19RPS, we will not expect you to:

- meet the full building standard requirements and notification requirements of the [Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil Regulations \(SSAFO\)](#) to store additional slurry
- only spread waste milk on the same area in any 4 week period as required under the [J10 waste exemption](#)
- spread in line with your planned farm nutrient management plan required under [Farming Rules for Water](#) - Reduction and Prevention of Agricultural Diffuse Pollution (England) Regulations 2018

This COVID-19 RPS does not apply to any other activity, even if it is under the same legislation. You may still need other permits, licences or approvals for other activities you carry out, and for activities regulated by other bodies.

Conditions you must comply with

You must keep records that show why you needed to use this COVID-19RPS. For example, records of:

- staff absences
- contractors being unavailable
- supply chain failures for example, uncollected milk or cattle off-movements

You must keep these records for 2 years after this COVID-19RPS has expired, including any extensions to it. You must make them available to the Environment Agency on request.

You must make sure your activities do not endanger human health or the environment. You must not:

- cause a risk of pollution to water, air, soil, plants or animals
- cause a nuisance through noise or odours
- adversely affect the countryside or places of special interest

Places of special interest include:

- Special Areas of Conservation
- Special Protection Areas
- Ramsar sites
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- National and local nature reserves
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Marine Conservation Zones
- National Parks

Contingency plan

You must have a contingency plan to:

- minimise the breach of regulatory requirements

- minimise the impact and duration of not complying with regulatory requirements
- avoid causing pollution

You must make sure that all your staff and contractors are aware of your contingency plan. The plan must include field inspections to assess the risk of slurry or milk getting into surface water or groundwater.

You must get any approvals you need from other regulatory bodies, such as:

- Natural England
- Rural Payments Agency

Additional slurry storage

You must normally comply with SSAFO to store slurry. However, we will allow you to not meet the full SSAFO requirements for slurry storage provided you store it for:

- the minimum period of time necessary
- no more than 12 months

You must only consider building additional storage if existing facilities are inadequate. You must [notify the Environment Agency](#) if you need additional slurry storage.

If you are building a new facility to store additional slurry you must:

- check planning requirements with your local planning authority
- [contact the Environment Agency](#) before building
- agree each location with the Environment Agency
- install tanks, liners and slurry bags to manufacturer's instructions
- make sure the base of earth bank lagoons is above the water table – there should be at least 1 metre of clay subsoil beneath the proposed base
- use a trial pit to confirm the depth of the clay layer – the resulting hole must be backfilled and puddled in
- use liners where there is doubt about soil permeability – lower grade liners can be used for temporary storage but use high grade liners in high risk areas
- monitor the facility to make sure there are no leaks
- locate it at least 10 metres from watercourses and land drains – use temporary trial trenches if you are unsure about the presence of land drains
- locate it at least 50 metres from groundwater sources including private drinking water supplies
- decommission it as soon as it is no longer needed

If you are using shared facilities you must:

- consider any biosecurity risks
- agree management arrangements
- agree where responsibility lies

For more information see the:

- Environment Agency [preventing agricultural pollution in exceptional circumstances](#) guidance
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE) [Managing Slurry on farms](#) information sheet
- CIRIA [Livestock manure and silage storage infrastructure for agriculture](#) report

How to spread slurry or milk

You can only spread milk to land if you hold a [U10 waste exemption](#). This exemption has no cost but you must register it with the Environment Agency.

You must leave at least 3 weeks between each application of milk to reduce surface sealing and to let the soil recover.

You must only spread slurry or milk on land with low run-off or drainage risk.

You must comply with all the other requirements of the [U10 waste exemption](#) and [Farming Rules for Water](#).

If you mix slurry with milk you increase the risk of producing lethal or explosive gases such as methane, carbon dioxide, ammonia and hydrogen sulphide. For more information see the HSE [Managing Slurry on farms information sheet](#).

Enforcement

A COVID-19 RPS means that the Environment Agency will not normally take enforcement action against you provided:

- your activity meets the description set out in this COVID-19RPS
- you comply with the conditions set out in this COVID-19RPS
- your activity does not, and is not likely to, cause environmental pollution or harm human health

If you operate under this COVID-19 RPS, but think you may no longer be able to comply with its conditions, you must tell the Environment Agency immediately.

The Environment Agency will monitor how operators use and comply with this COVID-19RPS through its proportionate, risk-based inspection and monitoring activity.

When to check back

This COVID-19 RPS will be withdrawn on 30 September 2020 unless we extend it. After this date you must comply with regulatory requirements for spreading milk and slurry to land and storing slurry.

Contact the Environment Agency

You must notify the Environment Agency by email and get written approval before using this COVID-19RPS. We will respond by email.

Put this wording in the title of your email:

- Agriculture: COVID-19 RPS C12 – for action

Email to: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

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