

Tell us whether you accept cookies

We use [cookies to collect information](#) about how you use GOV.UK. We use this information to make the website work as well as possible and improve government services.

Accept all cookies

Set cookie preferences



GOV.UK



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.

[Hide message](#)

[Home](#) > [Water and sewerage company OSM and UWWTR sampling affected by COVID-19: RPS C3](#)



Environment
Agency

Guidance

Water and sewerage company OSM and UWWTR sampling affected by COVID-19: RPS C3

Published 6 April 2020

Contents

1. [When this COVID-19 RPS applies](#)
2. [Conditions you must comply with](#)
3. [Enforcement](#)
4. [When to check back](#)
5. [Contact](#)

You need a permit to discharge sewage and trade effluent into inland freshwaters, coastal waters and groundwater. This COVID-19 regulatory position statement (RPS) applies to regulatory sampling carried out in accordance with your permit

in relation to Operator Self-Monitoring (OSM) and Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 1994 (UWWTR) monitoring.

Water and sewerage companies that monitor discharges from wastewater treatment works (WwTW) and water treatment works (WTW) must check that discharges comply with numeric quality limits in environmental permits.

If you follow the conditions in this COVID-19RPS you can reduce how often you self-monitor discharges of:

- treated sewage effluent from WwTW
- trade effluent from WTW

You must get written agreement from your Environment Agency water company account manager before you use this COVID-19 RPS.

1. When this COVID-19 RPS applies

This COVID-19 RPS only applies if you have missed any sample collections or analysis because of:

- staff shortages due to COVID-19
- restricted access caused by people or places being infected or potentially infected with COVID-19 – for example, if a WwTW, WTW or laboratory is in a zone of restricted access

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

- reschedule missed OSM and UWWTR sample(s)
- collect and report the number of OSM and UWWTR samples required by your permit in 2020

You must demonstrate that you have taken all reasonable steps to continue sampling and analysis. Reasonable steps include:

- contingency planning to avoid or minimise disruption to your business because of COVID-19
- COVID-19 response planning to minimise the impact and duration of not being able to comply with your permit

2. Conditions you must comply with

You must comply with all the other requirements of your environmental permit.

You must minimise the number of OSM and UWWTR samples you miss and cannot reschedule and maintain a record of those missed.

You must prioritise collecting and analysing OSM samples of discharges from WwTW and WTW which have the greatest potential to cause environmental damage.

You must give highest priority to OSM sampling of discharges upstream of drinking water abstractions. This includes groundwater discharges into a groundwater source protection zone 1.

You must also give highest priority to discharges which fall into the following permit condition or performance categories:

- numeric limits that protect Natura 2000 sites, Ramsar sites or sites of special scientific interest
- numeric limits for ammoniacal nitrogen of 5 mg/l or less
- numeric limits for phosphorus of 1 mg/l or less
- UV disinfection for shellfish and/or bathing waters
- increased sample frequency due to previous numeric limit failures

You must update your relevant quality management systems to reflect changes to your monitoring programmes after you have prioritised.

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

You must keep these records for 24 months 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 to water, air, soil, plants or animals
- adversely affect the countryside or places of special interest

Places of Special Interest include but are not limited to:

- European sites (Special Areas of Conservation and 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

You must continue to tell the Environment Agency about any performance issues or pollution incidents, following normal reporting routes and processes. This is required by permit condition 4.3.1 and operational instruction 16_02.

3. 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
- you have taken all reasonable steps to comply with your permits

If a WwTW does not have the required number of UWWTR samples taken and reported in 2000, we will not record them in the 2020 Environmental Performance Assessment as failing for not having enough samples. This is provided they meet all of the conditions in this COVID-19 RPS.

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.

4. When to check back

This COVID-19 RPS will be withdrawn on 30 June 2020 unless the Environment Agency extends it. After this date you must comply with your permits.

5. Contact

Environment Agency water company account managers.

Is this page
useful?

[Yes](#)

[No](#)

[Is there anything wrong with this
page?](#)

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): what you need to do](#)

Transition period

[Transition period: check how to get ready](#)

Services and information

[Benefits](#)

[Births, deaths, marriages and care](#)

[Business and self-employed](#)

[Childcare and parenting](#)

[Citizenship and living in the UK](#)

[Crime, justice and the law](#)

[Disabled people](#)

[Driving and transport](#)

[Education and learning](#)

[Employing people](#)

[Environment and countryside](#)

[Housing and local services](#)

[Money and tax](#)

[Passports, travel and living abroad](#)

[Visas and immigration](#)

[Working, jobs and pensions](#)

Departments and policy

[How government works](#)

[Departments](#)

[Worldwide](#)

[Services](#)

[Guidance and regulation](#)

[News and communications](#)

[Research and statistics](#)

[Policy papers and consultations](#)

[Transparency and freedom of information releases](#)

[Help](#) [Privacy](#) [Cookies](#) [Contact](#) [Accessibility statement](#) [Terms and conditions](#) [Rhestr o Wasanaethau Cymraeg](#)

Built by the [Government Digital Service](#)

OG

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated



© Crown copyright

