



**ICOSA WATER SERVICES LIMITED**

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**GUIDE TO TRADE EFFLUENT**



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## INTRODUCTION

Within this document you will find information about non-domestic trade effluent that is discharged into our sewers and drains from your business or industrial process.

If you should have any further questions that aren't answered in within this document please do not hesitate to contact us, details can be found on page 10. You can also find out more about your water and/or wastewater retailer at [www.open-water.org.uk](http://www.open-water.org.uk).

If you distributed trade effluent from a household premises, please contact us.

## OUR ROLE AS A REGULATOR

All Water Services Companies in their role as sewerage undertakers are responsible for the control of trade effluent discharges within their respective areas of appointment. The various sections of the Water Industry Act 1991 which define these powers & responsibilities are shown in Table 1.

This Act of Parliament consolidated all previous trade effluent legislation. Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own legislation although the content is similar. At a European level the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive requires all member states to implement a trade effluent control regime, to preauthorise such discharges and to review those authorisations on a regular basis. The Water Industry Act 1991 enables the UK to meet these requirements.

The Water Act 2014 introduced competition for non-household customers together with the concept of wholesales and retailers. Icosa Water is a wholesaler and is responsible for the infrastructure, treatment processes and the regulation of trade effluent discharges made into its sewer network. Retailers undertake billing, meter reading and customer services activities.

The new market came into effect in April 2017 and applies to most trade effluent dischargers. It enables eligible businesses to choose and switch their retailer.

### Sections of the Water Industry Act 1991 which relate to Trade Effluent

Section 111	Restriction on the discharge of harmful materials to the public sewer
Section 118 (1)	Consent required for discharge of trade effluent into public sewer
Section 118 (5)	Offence to discharge trade effluent without consent
Section 119	Application for trade effluent consent
Section 120	Applications for the discharge of special category effluent
Section 121	Conditions that may be attached to consents
Section 121 (5)	Offence to contravene the conditions of consent

Section 122	Appeals to the Director with respect to decisions on applications etc
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Section 132 – 134	References and reviews relating to special category effluent
Section 135	Restrictions on power to fix charges under Chapter III
Section 136	Use of information from meters
Section 137	Relates to appeals under section 122 or 126(1)
Section 138	Definition of “special category effluent”
Section 139	Power to apply Chapter III to other effluents
Section 140	Pre-1989 Act authority for trade effluent discharges etc
Section 141 (1)	Definition of trade effluent and trade premises
Section 142 – 144	Power of water undertaker to raise trade effluent charges
Section 168 – 172	Right of undertaker to enter a premise to carry out Statutory functions
Section 196	Duty of undertaker to maintain a public register.
Section 204	Provision of information to sewerage undertaker with respect to trade effluent discharges

To find details of the Water Industry Act, visit [legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk).

## WHY IS TRADE EFFLUENT IMPORTANT?

The water that you and your business use is abstracted from river reservoirs and groundwater sources. Before it reaches your pipes, it must be treated so it is ready for you to use.

Most of the water that we all use generates waste effluent. This waste effluent is usually disposed of into a local sewer network. This network transports your waste effluent to a water recycling centre where it is cleaned with various physical, chemical and biological processes. After cleaning it is returned to the environment where it can be abstracted again for drinking water, irrigation or recreational activities.

This is everyone's water and it is important that we all make sure our sewage network and recycling systems are designed to accommodate the waste effluents discharged into it. This helps us make sure we protect public health and maintain a clean environment.

If you misuse the system, it can have serious consequence for the environment and public health. Therefore, we all must make sure all trade effluents are legally discharged and in accordance with a consent.

## WHAT IS TRADE EFFLUENT?

Trade effluent is the liquid waste discharged into our sewers and drains from your business or industrial process.

This covers anything that is not domestic sewerage. Domestic sewerage is toilet, bath or hand washing waste.

Wastewater discharged from hotels, pubs, restaurants, takeaways, caravan parks are not classified as trade effluent, they are however regulated under Section 111 of the Water Industry Act.

These premises must not be found to be discharging fats, oils, or food scraps into the sewers. These substances cause blockages of the sewer network. Blockages not only jeopardise the safe operation of the sewer network but also staff who enter the network to clean it.

Therefore, to help protect the health and safety of its Operations Teams, Icosa Water will prosecute persistent offenders.

The table below shows examples of commercial and industrial properties that produce wastewater and whether the wastewater is classified as trad effluent or not.

### Trade Effluent Examples

Yes	No
Commercial car wash	Kitchen and toilets at commercial properties
Laundrettes	Restaurants, pubs and hotels
Good and drink production	Hairdressers
Chemical Manufactures	Dentists
Metal Finishes	Care homes
Engineering	Domestic swimming pools
Commercial swimming pools	

### Example of temporary trade effluent

Heating system flushing
Groundwater remediation

Please note: these tables are indicative and not exclusive. For a full legal definition of trade effluent in section 141 of the Water Industry Act 1991.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TRADE EFFLUENT

It is important that we offer your business the effective trade effluent collection and treatment service.

We want to make sure that public health including our employees and contractors, how we operate, and that the environment is fully protected. This includes complying with Environment Permits issued to us by the Environment Agency for discharges from our own sewage treatment works back into the aquatic environment. To ensure this all happens Icosa Water needs to control discharges of trade effluents.

The level of trade effluent discharged into our sewers can day to day ranging from hundreds to thousands of litres. As well as the volume, the composition of trade effluent discharges can vary considerably.

For example, the effluent from a small launderette would typically be a low volume containing detergents and residues from the washing. This is very different to effluent produced during an electroplating process which may be a large flow and containing persistent and potentially toxic substances together with significant levels of metals. Trade effluent from a food processor would typically be different again with the effluent containing a significant organic load.

This variability, together with varying capacity in our sewers, treatment works and the watercourses into which they discharge, means that we need to carefully assess and regulate all discharges of trade effluent made into our sewerage systems.

This assessment helps ensure that the receiving sewer network and associated treatment system which receives your trade effluent has the resilience and capacity, so it can be safely handled, treated and finally returned into the environment.

Once our assessment is complete we will issue you with a legal document called a 'consent' to discharge.

### **The primary objectives of trade effluent control are to:**

- Comply with the law, protecting people and assets.
- Prevent unacceptable effects on water resources and the environment.
- Provide data regarding the volume, rate of discharge, nature and composition of the trade effluent discharge for operational purposes and for use in the design of future wastewater treatment works and collection systems.
- Ensure proper management of water resources.
- Provide a reliable and cost reflective service to industrial customers.

## DO I NEED A CONSENT FROM ICOSA WATER FOR MY TRADE EFFLUENT?

We need to know if you plan to discharge anything other than domestic waste into a drain which is connected to a public sewer network. It is your responsibility to obtain consent prior to commencing any trade effluent discharge.

It is a criminal offence under Section 118 (5) of the Water Industry Act to discharge any trade effluent to sewer without the consent from Icosa Water. If your business operates within one of our appointed areas, you may be subject to legal action if you discharge without consent.

If your business manufactures or processes materials such as:

- Chemicals
- Metal finishing
- Engineering work
- Food and drink
- A laundry, launderette or car wash
- A leisure centre with a swimming pool(s)

Short term discharges (e.g. contaminated groundwater from land remediation/building projects, flushing of central heating/cooling systems in commercial premises, etc.) are also subject to temporary trade effluent authorisation.

## WHAT IS A CONSENT TO DISCHARGE?

A consent is a legal document issued by Icosa Water in our role as a regulator using the powers set out in the Water Industry Act 1991. The 'consent' will contain a list of conditions which must be continuously complied with to control the quality and quantity of the trade effluent that is discharged.

Depending on the industrial or manufacturing activity together with the materials handled at the site consents will contain numeric limits for one or more of the parameters listed below.

**PLEASE NOTE: This list is not exhaustive.**

- **ORGANIC LOAD** - Chemical and biological oxygen demand may be limited this is determined on an individual basis and is in place to prevent overloading of the wastewater treatment processes to ensure we manage our impact on the environment.
- **SUSPENDED SOLIDS** - Suspended solids can cause siltation and blockages in the sewerage system. Total suspended solids at pH7 is determined on an individual basis.
- **SEPERABLE OIL AND GREASE** - Separable oil and grease can build up within the sewer leading to odour, blockages and subsequent foul flooding. Oil and grease can also build up on equipment such as pumps and cause operational difficulties at pumping stations and treatment works.
- **AMMONIACAL NITROGEN** - Ammonia can cause unsafe sewer atmospheres and toxicity problems in watercourses for aquatic animals. It is classified as dangerous for the environment. A guideline limit is 250mg/l however this is determined on an individual basis.

- **pH** - The normal range of pH allowed is 6 to 10. Extremes of pH can lead to unsafe working environments, affect biological treatment systems and damage the sewer fabric network.
- **SULPHATE** - A guideline limit is 1000mg/l, as Sulphate can cause damage to concrete structures.
- **TEMPERATURE** - This is limited by statute to a maximum of 43.3°C.
- **TOXIC METALS** - This group includes the metals; antimony, beryllium, chromium, copper, lead, nickel, selenium, silver, tin, vanadium and zinc. Metals can cause a range of problems the presence of toxic metals can inhibit biological treatment processes and they may accumulate in the environment.
- **VOLUME** - This parameter is normally limited to a number of cubic metres per 24 hour period and a rate of discharge in litres per second and is determined on an individual basis.
- **METHANE** - Methane can cause unsafe sewer atmospheres. For this reason, it is limited at 0.14mg/l.
- **FLAMMABLE SUBSTANCES** – Flammable substances or substances which can produce flammable or explosive atmospheres will be prohibited or controlled to safe levels.
- **HYDROGEN CYANIDE** - Hydrogen cyanide is highly toxic and can inhibit treatment processes. The limit is not greater than 1mg/l.
- **HYDROGEN SULPHIDE** - The limit for substances that can produce hydrogen sulphide upon acidification is normally 1mg/l. Hydrogen sulphide is a toxic gas that can build up in the sewer atmosphere, leading to hazardous working conditions. Hydrogen sulphide also has a very pungent odour which can cause smell nuisance.

- **OTHER CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES** - Certain substances are controlled under European directives and a list of these substances is included in the application form for a consent (Annex 1 form G02 which can be found on at [icosawater.co.uk](http://icosawater.co.uk)). The list includes the metals cadmium and mercury, chlorinated solvents and a range of pesticides. These substances are controlled as they are considered persistent within the environment and can accumulate through the food chain. They can also inhibit biological treatment processes.
- **OTHER SUBSTANCES** - Other substances that may be present in the discharge will be assessed and controlled on an individual basis. To ensure compliance with Section 130 of the Water Industry Act 1991 Icosa Water may consult with and/or seek advice from the Environment Agency to set limits for some parameters or chemicals. This process helps ensure that headroom (the difference between the actual discharge and the consent limit) is managed in a way that maximises available capacity for further economic growth.

**It is an offence under section 118 of the Water Industry Act 1991 to discharge trade effluent without consent., so it is important that you obtain one prior to making discharge. Failure to obtain a consent may lead to enforcement action being taken by Icosa Water and this may result in prosecution.**

**If you are currently discharging trade effluent without a consent you must contact your retailer immediately.**

Area of Appointment	Map of area served by Icosa Water
West Raynham Business Park including The Kiptons and Orchard	

## HOW TO OBTAIN A CONSENT TO DISCHARGE

Discharge of trade effluent to Icosa Waters public sewer network may only be made with the consent of Icosa water. The consent is a legal document which authorises a trade discharge, subject to certain conditions.

It is your responsibility to obtain permission prior to making a discharge to the public sewer network. To obtain permission you must complete the application form at [icosawater.co.uk](http://icosawater.co.uk). All the relevant documents can be found there.

*GE/02: Trade effluent discharge notice*

Guidance on how to complete this form is provided in:

*Guidance Notes to assist Non-Household Customers to complete a G/02 Trade Effluent Discharge Notice form*

This form must be accurately filled out in detail and include information on the constituents of the trade effluent discharge. This is necessary in the determination of appropriate conditions. The trader must also provide a drainage plan.

The plan must show the foul sewer to where the effluent will be discharged. The sample point must be clearly marked on the plan and surface water drainage must be clearly identified. After receiving the application form from your retailer, we will write to you/your retailer to confirm receipt of the application and inform you if your application is “duly made”.

“Duly made” means that we have all the information we need to begin to assess your application.

Icosa Water will then either grant or refuse consent within two months. Failure to issue a consent within this period does not give you “deemed” consent to discharge. Discharging to the public sewer network without a consent or authorisation by Icosa Water is a criminal offence.

If the discharge is of a “Special Category” nature we will need to refer the details to the Environment Agency and await its decision before issuing a consent. Should this be required, the two-month period is suspended from the date on which the referral is made and re-commences from the date on which the referral is determined.

If you are unhappy with any part of your consent, you should, in the first instance, discuss your concerns with Icosa Water.

If any problem cannot be resolved between us, you can appeal to The Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT) at the Office of Water Services, Centre City Tower, 7 Hill Street, Birmingham B5 4UA.

When a consent is issued it will be sent to your Company Secretary at the Registered Office, or in the case of a partnership or private business to the named partners/owners at the business or private address.

Icosa Water is required under law to keep a register of Trade Effluent consents and associated documents to which the public must be given access. The register is available to view on our website.



## FAQS

### Is there an application fee?

Application fees may apply, you should contact your retailer for further information.

### Do I need to comply with the consent conditions?

Yes, at all times. If you don't comply with the consent conditions, it is an offence under Section 121 of the Water Industry Act 1991. You will be informed when a sample has failed one or more of the consent limits or when we become aware of any other breach of consent. However, it is your responsibility to ensure compliance with the consent and we expect you to take all steps necessary to achieve this always.

In summary Icosa Water will not tolerate persistent non-compliance or discharges which impact, or have a potential to impact, upon public health, our operations or the wider environment. In these cases, enforcement action will be taken which may ultimately result in prosecution.

### Will Icosa Water take samples of my trade effluent?

Yes, from time to time we will visit your premises and may take a sample of your trade effluent discharge. Samples are taken to assess compliance with the consent and may also be taken for wholesale charging purposes. It is your responsibility to ensure that a safe, accessible monitoring point is provided that will enable us to obtain representative samples of your trade effluent. The frequency that we take compliance monitoring samples will be based on an assessment of your effluent and the sewerage system into which you discharge. Some types of trade effluent are relatively innocuous and may not be sampled frequently but more significant discharges may be sampled on a weekly basis. In some cases, we may also ask you to monitor your effluent and provide us with sample results.

### Do Icosa Water staff have a right of access onto my site?

Yes, our staff and/or contractors have a legal right of access under the Water Industry Act 1991 in order to carry out monitoring and enforcement activities. This includes sampling of your trade effluent and investigating pollution incidents. All of our staff carry identification. You can also confirm their identity by calling us on 0330 111 0780.

### Who is responsible for the health & safety of Icosa Water staff whilst on my site?

You have a duty of care under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 to identify and notify our employees of any health and safety risks that they may face whilst visiting your premises in connection with their trade effluent duties. All associated risk assessments must be made available to our employees on entering your premises and all significant hazards brought to their attention.

### What if my circumstances change?

If you're proposing a change of process which may impact on the quantity or quality of your trade effluent or which is not stated in your consent, you must contact your retailer at the earliest opportunity and prior to the change being made. You will also need to contact your retailer if there's a change of name or occupier or you are to cease discharging.

### **Does the Environment Agency also regulate trade effluent discharges?**

Although we are primarily responsible for controlling trade effluent discharged into our sewers, there are occasions where the Environment Agency is also involved. The operation of some industrial processes may require an Environmental Permit and in some cases discharge conditions may be included in the permit. This normally applies to larger operations including chemical manufacture, landfill sites, large electroplaters and nuclear facilities. If you need further clarification regarding the Environmental Permitting process, we suggest that you contact the Environment Agency. Similarly, the presence of certain Prescribed Substances or effluent derived from a Prescribed Process may require referral to the Environment Agency. These discharges are referred to as Special Category Effluent and the Environment Agency may wish to set discharge conditions which we will need to incorporate into the consent. For more information regarding Special Category Effluent please contact your retailer.

### **Can my consent be viewed by the public?**

Yes, this is a legal requirement under the Water Industry Act 1991. Please note that a charge is normally made for providing a discharger with a replacement copy of their consent. Please contact your retailer for further information.

### **Can I discharge trade effluent to a surface water sewer?**

No, this is not allowed. Surface water drains and sewers must only be used to convey uncontaminated surface water only.

### **Can I discharge trade effluent to a surface water sewer?**

No, we don't allow any tankers to discharge trade effluent into our sewage treatment works.

### **What if I'm unhappy with Icosa Waters' service?**

If you're unhappy with the conditions of a consent, our refusal to give you consent or the time it has taken us to process it, please contact your retailer who will contact us on your behalf. We will endeavour to resolve the problem. However, if we can't resolve the issue between us there is a formal appeal process. To activate this, you should contact the Water Services Regulation Authority (WSRA, also known as Ofwat). Ofwat has produced an information note regarding appeals which should be available from your retailer or from the WSRA website.

### **How does charging work?**

Please contact your retailer for charging information.

### **Where can I get technical advice?**

In our role as a regulator we don't provide specific technical advice regarding trade effluent discharges. However, you can contact your retailer who may be able to help. Alternatively, there are several specialist companies who can offer you further advice regarding effluent management and compliance. Information on companies offering this service will be available via the internet and local business directories.

## GET IN TOUCH WITH US

There are a number of ways in which you can contact us.

### You can write to us at:

Icosa Water Services  
Focal Point  
27-35 Fleet Street  
Swindon  
SN1 1RQ

### Call us:

If you have any queries, please feel free to call our Customer Services Team on **0330 111 0780**.

### Email us:

**customerservices@icosawater.co.uk**

### You can visit our website at:

**[www.icosawater.co.uk](http://www.icosawater.co.uk)**

### Our office hours are:

General queries and billing:  
Monday – Friday 8.30am – 5.30pm; excluding bank holidays

### Emergencies:

Please call our 24 hour emergency number on **0330 111 2014**

You can also find us on social media on Twitter and Facebook, simply just search 'Icosa Water'.