



A GUIDE TO NEW AUTHORISATIONS QUARRY DEWATERING

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From the 1st of January 2018 it has been a requirement that abstraction of water for quarry dewatering requires an abstraction licence.

If you were dewatering prior to the 1st January 2018 then you fall into some special arrangements called the “Transition Arrangements”. If you plan to abstract or started to abstract after the 1st January 2018 then you must apply for an abstraction licence following the conventional route.

TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS

These are a special set of arrangements that allow abstraction to continue while an abstraction licence is being sorted out. They only apply to abstractors operating before 1st January 2018 and only cover the quantities and rates of abstraction that can be justified between 1st January 2011 and 31st December 2017.

An application must be accepted as valid by the Environment Agency or Natural Resources Wales by 31st December 2019. If the application is not accepted by that date then abstraction would have to stop and an application made following the conventional route. This would take a minimum of 4 months, during which you couldn't dewater.

To make sure that the application is validated in time we urge you to submit applications as soon as is practical and certainly no later than **June 2019**. We think that preparing the submission is a good autumn / winter job.

MAKING AN APPLICATION

The Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales have been directed by government to take a “light touch, risk based” approach. The Environment Agency have made it clear that this means they want simple applications and that they will ask for detail, if they need it, once they start determining the applications from January 2020. Natural Resources Wales have a more complicated and lengthy application form and it seems that they require more detailed information as part of the initial application process.

Whether it's a simple or more complicated process, there are key pieces of information that need to be submitted:

-  **Quantities of water abstracted historically, and the elevation at which the water table is maintained.**
-  **A site map showing the water management routings.**
-  **A water flow diagram summarising the water management routings.**
-  **A description of the site's hydrogeological setting (simple conceptual model).**

COLLATING DATA

It has become clear that for many operations that there is little data on actual abstraction or that the data is not stored in an easily retrievable way. This is, at the moment, the single biggest stumbling block. However, this does not mean that you have no data. There are several ways in which you can estimate pumped volumes. In many cases this can be done by brain storming and obtaining relevant information that can be used to calculate volumes. For example, pump running hours. These could be estimated from known operational procedures (switch on/off times or sump control levels), pump service records, or hour clocks on generators. Pump specification and duty curves will provide abstraction rates, or existing pumps can be “calibrated” by measuring the flow rate. Flow measurement in channels

may be appropriate as might direct flow measurement using strap on instruments. Gathering data on what is happening today, may help in quantifying or calibrating what happened in the past, particularly if “not much has changed”.

In working out pumped volumes you are trying to fill in the table below:

MONTH	2011	2012	>>>>	2017	MAXIMUM
January					
February					
v v v v					
December					
Total					

The number that you will be working with is the maximum volume in a month and the maximum annual volume, together with hourly/daily abstraction or transfer rate.

The site map and process diagram need not be complicated, but they need to show:

-  **Where in the real world abstraction takes place, how water is transferred and stored and where it is discharged.**
-  **Where flow monitoring is or could be undertaken.**
-  **Where non-dewatering abstraction is taking place and what for, and if appropriate abstraction licence references to licensed abstractions.**

If you have an existing scheme of water monitoring then this should be described, together with the data available, in summary. Data sets and detailed reports do not need to be submitted initially.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

There are different forms for the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales. Make sure you use the right one.

Submission is straightforward and applications will follow a standard process once received. If you are not aware of how the abstraction licence application system works within the agencies then it is worth researching so that you are aware of the different parts of the system that can cause blockage and delay.

The quarry dewatering applications will be dealt with by a team in Solihull (although you will send your applications to Sheffield). They will gain experience as they go and may ask for clarification or additional information before they “validate” the application. At this stage, the application is simply being validated. The decision that is being made is “is the application form completed correctly and fully?” and “is there enough information for us [the Environment Agency or Natural Resources Wales] to take the application to the next stage?”.

The second question is possibly where the two organisations differ. The Environment Agency are looking for basic data at this stage, and may request more during determination (2020 – 2022) for more difficult sites. Natural Resources Wales may require detailed information at this stage. We still recommend submitting basic data and responding to requests for more, rather than overloading the system with unnecessary detailed information.

THE OUTCOME

At some point the application will be validated. At that point you may continue dewatering and at a rate not exceeding the quantity of water or the depth that you have specified until your licence is issued, before the end of 2022.

NEW WATER

If historically you have only abstracted modest quantities of water and you anticipate needing to abstract more, or you intend to deepen the quarry, you will need to make an application through the standard route. The New Authorisations process does not cover that situation.

OTHER ABSTRACTIONS & OTHER USES

It is very common in the quarrying industry to see water being used for other purposes. The source of this water may be the dewatering or a separate supply e.g. a borehole. In many cases the abstraction and use have never been licensed. There are legitimate reasons for this caused by legislative confusion over the years. There are now very few exemptions from abstraction licensing. It is important that any unlicensed sources are sorted out now.

HOW CAN ENVIREAU WATER HELP?

Envireau Water is the UK's leading independent abstraction licensing and water management specialist. We are also specialists in issues related to the minerals industry, giving us unique expertise in this arena.

Envireau Water has been involved in the development and implementation of the New Authorisations process since it was first raised in about 1998 and as an active member of the Mineral Products Association Water Group.

Not every application needs our help but if you:

-  **Are struggling to define your historic use**
-  **Have no hydrogeological description of the site**
-  **Have other unlicensed abstractions**
-  **Need to apply for New Water**
-  **Are located close to sensitive environmental sites**
-  **Have an extensive water monitoring requirement**

we suggest that you should contact us for a free, no obligation conversation. It is far more difficult and expensive to sort out licensing problems at the end of the process, than it is if the process is started and presented in the right way at the beginning.

“ IF ENVIREAU WATER CAN'T GET YOU AN ABSTRACTION LICENCE, NOBODY CAN! ”



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