

Wastewater compliance and pollution control

Effectively managing our wastewater treatment works, network of sewers and pumping stations is essential for maintaining and improving the water quality of rivers, lakes and bathing waters. In our regulated water business in the north west of England, we achieved 97.25% compliance at our wastewater treatment works. In Scotland and Sofia (Bulgaria) we achieved 100% compliance.

We're regulated for our wastewater activities in England and Wales by the Environment Agency (EA) and in Scotland by the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA). However, the way we are regulated and the boundaries of legislation affecting us have begun to change.

The introduction of the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2007, in April 2008, combines waste management licences and Pollution Prevention Control (PPC) permits through the creation of a single environmental permit and common procedures. This has benefited a number of our wastewater treatment works in the north west of England which had previously held both site waste management licences and PPC permits, by simplifying administration while ensuring the same level of environmental compliance is upheld.

Meanwhile, the Environmental Protection Operator and Pollution Risk Assessment (EPOPRA) was introduced by the Environment Agency as a means of monitoring environmental permits. It's used to decide the cost of an application and any annual charges. A company which scores poorly and so is a greater pollution risk will be monitored more frequently by the regulator and will therefore incur more costs. We've been reviewing potential changes to our asset standards and engineering instructions to take the best available techniques (BAT) into account. At the same time, we use environmental management systems to help manage our risks and reduce our costs.