The following Minimum Standard is applicable on all projects

Introduction

There are a number of UK regulations that exist to protect the water environment: including rivers, streams, lakes, reservoirs and groundwater. Activities covered by this Minimum Standard have the potential to cause pollution to the water environment from contaminants: typically silt, mud and oil / fuel.

Water that has accumulated in an excavation should be discharged as follows:

- Over open ground (only where the water is uncontaminated, will not cause localised flooding and with landowner permission)
- Into surface waters (either under an environmental permit or in England and Wales, in accordance with the Environment Agency position statement on dewatering excavations.
- To a foul sewer (under temporary Trade Effluent Consent from the relevant water company), or
- Taken away by tanker (in accordance with the Waste Management Standard SHEMS-STD-GR-065)

Temporary discharges of water from excavations to a watercourse (considered to be a trade effluent by the regulators) will not require a permit from the environmental regulator in England if certain conditions are met. In order to meet these conditions, water from excavations will require settlement / filtration and possible further treatment (particularly if it is from contaminated ground). If the conditions cannot be met, discharge from excavations may require a 'bespoke' Environmental Permit from the relevant environmental regulator, which will incur a cost, and the application period can be up to four months.

In England temporary discharges of water from excavations to a watercourse must meet the conditions in the Environment Agency position statement to avoid the need for a permit.

An assessment must be made for planned discharges of water to surface water drains or watercourses against the criteria within the position statement (see checklist). This must be recorded and include details of control measures, such as consent conditions, settlement tanks and monitoring/ inspection.

Discharges of water from excavations to a foul sewer will require a temporary trade effluent consent from the relevant water company.

Before any discharge is made into a watercourse, the SHE Manager or Advisor must be consulted to ensure that the controls in place are effective.

Where low volumes of water are to be generated from small excavations, e.g. using a 2" pump, then 'end of pipe' filter socks or equivalent filters (including ones modified with hydrocarbon filters) can be used. However, care must be taken to ensure they are cleaned or replaced when saturated.

Pumps, generators and other equipment used in pumping activities, particularly those close to watercourses or on open ground must be monitored, at least weekly, for leaks and spills and must have a drip tray. To reduce the risk of hydraulic oil leaks from within the pump mechanism, electric pumps should be used for activities associated with controlled waters.

Discharges must be regularly monitored. If controls to reduce contaminants stop becoming effective, pumping must be **STOPPED** immediately for maintenance to be carried out.

Planning

Before starting work, the level of risk for contaminated ground or groundwater should be investigated. If the ground on site is contaminated, the water to be removed is also likely to be contaminated and must be treated to an appropriate standard.

Contact the SHE Manager or Advisor for further guidance.

Procurement
The pollution prevention kit catalogue, including sediment filtration socks etc., is available from Unitas Procurement.

When discharging large volumes of water to surface water or foul drains, large scale settlement tanks and specialist equipment may be required e.g. Siltbuster / flocculation.

Competence / Training
Persons operating pumping equipment must be trained in the use of the equipment. Persons recording details of monitoring of discharges must be competent to do so.

Documentation
Records of monitoring of discharges must be maintained, covering relevant permit conditions (e.g. pH, flow rate etc.) or time / place of discharge, water clarity, volume etc.

Where effluent is tankered away, duty of care records (i.e. waste carrier registration, environmental permit of waste facility, waste transfer note / hazardous waste consignment note) records must be maintained.

Further Guidance / Reference
The Pollution Prevention Standard must be followed.
Working at Construction and Demolition Sites PPG6: Pollution Prevention Guidance (Environment Agency)
Environment Agency position statement for temporary discharges from excavations

OPERATION – PUMPING OUT EXCAVATIONS CHECKLIST

Project:

Contract No: Date:

Name of Person Undertaking check or monitoring:

Check	Y	N
Pumping to watercourse, sewer or open ground		
The pumping operation is approved by a regulator or covered by Environment Agency regulatory position statement (see below).		
Landowner approval obtained for pumping to open ground.		
The point of discharge is to the correct location i.e. the sewer, manhole or gulley.		
The agreed treatment systems are in place before final discharge.		
Treatment systems are working and the discharge is clean.		
Pumps and generators are monitored for oil and fuel leaks.		

	Check	Y	N
	Checking whether temporary discharge from excavations meets requirements of Environment Agency regulatory position statement (and therefore is exempt from the requirement to obtain a permit to discharge)		
1.	Is the discharge temporary, for an overall period of less than 3 months?		
2.	Is the discharge made to a surface water system (such as a river, stream or the sea)? This includes discharge to surface water drains / soakaways.		
3.	Will the discharge pollute the surface water or adversely affect aquatic life?		
4.	Describe how the discharge will be treated to removed silt / sediment and any other pollutants:		
5.	Is the discharge location within, or less than 500 metres upstream of a riverine or marine European site (see below) or SSSI, or within a site designated for nature conservation (such as NNR, LNR, Local Wildlife Sites)? • Special Area of Conservation (SAC) • Special Protection Area (SPA) • RAMSAR Site • Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) • National Nature Reserve (NNR) • Local Nature Reserve (LNR) • Local Wildlife site		
	The locations of protected areas in the vicinity of the site can be checked on the 'MAGIC' website: http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/		
6.	Will the discharge have the potential to cause flooding from the surface water?		
7.	Will the discharge have the potential to cause erosion of the banks or bed of the surface water?		
If answers to 1 and 2 are 'Yes', and answers to 3, 5, 6 and 7 are 'No', then the discharge complies with the Environment Agency regulatory position statement and does not need a permit.			