



DAERA Environmental Advice for Planning

Standing Advice

Vehicle washing

Advice for Planning Officers to inform decision making and applicants seeking planning permission for vehicle washing facilities.

Scope of this Standing Advice Guidance Document

This standing advice on planning applications for vehicle washing applies specifically to their potential impact upon water quality with regards to wastewater and rain water management. Issues such as contaminated land, badgers, bats etc. are not covered by this document.

Any development proposal where the site is located on potentially contaminated land will require an assessment of the risk to the water environment to accompany the application.

It is recommended that all risk assessment and risk management work follows the UK technical framework as described in the Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination (CLR11) (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/model-procedures-management-land-contamination>).

Site investigations should be designed and undertaken in accordance with appropriate guidance including British Standards BS 10175:2011 Code of practice for investigation of potentially contaminated land sites.

Information NIEA require for Vehicle Wash proposals:

Drainage Plans

NIEA require a detailed site drainage plan to be provided to help ensure the site is adequately designed to mitigate potentially polluting activities.

A drainage plan should clearly show the foul sewers, any combined drainage systems, the storm drainage network and detail where all drainage discharges to. Silt traps, oil interceptors and any other drainage infrastructure incorporated into the drainage network should also be illustrated. Pollution Prevention Guidelines (PPGs) PPG 3 - Use and design

of oil separators in surface water drainage systems; and PPG 13 - Vehicle washing and Cleaning, should be consulted for guidance.

Statutory Permissions

A copy of any statutory permissions granted by Water Management Unit for the proposed site should also be submitted.

NIEA Standing Advice for vehicle washing

Legal Requirement

NIEA have responsibility to enforce the requirements of the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999. It is an offence under the Water Order to discharge or deposit, whether knowingly or otherwise, any poisonous, noxious or polluting matter so that it enters a waterway or underground stratum. A waterway is defined as any river, stream, watercourse, inland water or tidal waters. Conviction for such an offence may involve a fine of up to £20,000 or imprisonment for a term of up to 3 months, or both.

Vehicle Wash

Wash water from vehicle washes, especially those using detergents / vehicle wash formulations, has the potential to pollute waterways and groundwater as it is likely to contain a mixture of detergents, dirt particles, organic matter and oil residues.

Disposal Options

NIEA has a preference for how such effluent is disposed of, based on the potential to pollute. The options in order of preference are:

1. Recycling without discharge.
2. Northern Ireland Water (NIW) foul sewer. Relevant permission must be obtained from NIW before making this connection. NIW can be contacted on their Waterline on 0345 7440088.
3. Holding tank and disposal via a registered/licensed carrier to a consented treatment facility with the capacity to adequately treat the effluent prior to discharge.
4. Consent under the Water (NI) Order 1999. This will only be considered **either** where detergents will not be used **or** where the effluent is going to a treatment system that has a separate nutrient supply (e.g. sewage) and has the ability to reduce the combined biological oxygen demand (BOD) to within consent limits.

Consent Option

It is advisable to contact the Industrial Consents section of NIEA as soon as possible and, in the interests of the applicant, before purchasing equipment or making an illegal discharge. Granting of Water Order consent is not guaranteed and will depend on a range of variables. No two locations or proposals are the same and NIEA cannot make a final decision on the appropriateness of a consent until it has received a completed application with fee and made

a full assessment. Where the site and/or the receiving medium (waterway or soil) prove unsuitable then **the consent application will be refused.**

Compliance Monitoring

The applicant will be required to install and maintain a treatment system capable of meeting all the conditions of any consent, if issued. It is probable that the discharge will be placed on the NIEA compliance assessment and monitoring programme for which an annual fee is payable by the consent holder. If the discharge is found to be non-compliant the consent holder will be subject to enforcement action.

Use of Detergents & Appropriate Treatment

The use of detergents will only be considered where the detergents used comply with Regulation (EC) No 648/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31st March 2004. This regulation is designed to ensure that any detergents used are bio-degradable and suitable for discharge after appropriate treatment.

Detergents however do not contain sufficient nutrient to sustain a conventional biological waste water treatment system and NIEA will therefore only consider consenting the use of detergents where it is to a treatment system that has a separate nutrient supply (e.g. sewage) and has the ability to reduce the combined BOD to within consent limits.

Discharge to a Waterway – (subject to ‘Use of Detergents & Appropriate Treatment’)

Consent conditions are site specific and vary depending on the following criteria:

1. the proposed maximum daily discharge volume
2. the water quality target for the receiving waterway
3. the available dilution under low flow conditions in the receiving waterway

Discharge via a Drainage Field (soak-away/sub-surface irrigation system) to Underground Stratum – subject to “Use of Detergents & Appropriate Treatment”

Consent to discharge via a drainage field into groundwater is dependent upon the capacity of the land to percolate water and the predicted maximum daily volume generated by the vehicle wash. The applicant must demonstrate, by doing a percolation test, that the land proposed for use as a drainage field is suitable for the proposed volume. The percolation test and the proposed drainage field, provided that the percolation test demonstrates the ground is suitable, must both be in accordance with British Standard BS6297:2007.

Any discharge to an underground stratum must be via a drainage field/soakaway capable of providing adequate treatment and dispersal of the maximum consented volume of effluent. Discharges to un-made ground will not be consented – all wash water must be captured on an impermeable surface and directed through a suitable sample point to the drainage field/soak-away.

Oil Interceptors and Silt Traps

Oil interceptors are recommended as a method of catching oil and preventing it either compromising a treatment system or causing pollution.

Detergents, if present in wash effluent, may cause oil to emulsify. Interceptors are designed to retain oil but may not retain emulsified oils. As a consequence it is important to ensure that vehicle wash effluent does not enter interceptors designed to retain oil.

Where feasible the use of grit/silt traps, accompanied by regular checking and maintenance, is advisable. These will help to prevent silt accumulating in pipes and/or treatment systems and/or soakaways. Where excessive silting occurs the system will fail and there is an associated danger of pollution.

Water Supply

If the vehicle wash uses a source of water supply other than the mains supply, an appropriate abstraction/impoundment licence issued under the Water Abstraction and Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 may be required. Further guidance is contained in Standing Advice – Abstractions and Impoundments, available on the DAERA website by following the link below:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/standing-advice-development-may-have-effect-water-environment-including-groundwater-and-fisheries>

Good Practice

Any treatment system used must produce an effluent which complies with the conditions of the consent issued.

Where an applicant wishes to discharge to/via a storm drain they must provide NIEA Water Management Unit with written permission from the owner of the storm drain (e.g. Northern Ireland Water (NIW) or Road Service). The consent conditions will be set as though the discharge is directly to the waterway into which the storm drain finally discharges.

Recommended Conditions and Informatives

Conditions

Condition: The drainage for the vehicle wash area must be constructed in line with the agreed drainage plan.

Reason: In order to decrease the risk of the incorrect diversion of wash water to drains carrying rain / surface water to a waterway.

Informatives

1. The use of detergents will only be considered where the detergents used comply with Regulation (EC) No 648/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31st March 2004.

2. All vehicle wash water must be captured on an impermeable surface designed to contain all contaminated runoff.
3. All parts of the treatment system should be regularly maintained to ensure their continued performance.
4. Any drainage or effluent containing detergents should not pass to an oil separator as the detergents will prevent the separator from working effectively.
5. The positioning of grit/silt traps should be designed to protect the treatment system and avoid suspended solids reaching the discharge point.
6. The applicant should comply with all the relevant Pollution Prevention Guidance (PPG's) and the replacement guidance series, Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPPs) in order to minimise the impact of the project on the environment, paying particular attention to:
 - PPG 03 - Use and design of oil separators in surface water drainage systems
 - PPG 04 - Disposal of sewage where no foul sewer is available
 - *NEW* GPP 13 - Vehicle washing and Cleaning
 - PPG 26 - Drums and intermediate bulk containers
7. Compliance with the advice in *NEW* GPP 05 Works and maintenance in or near water and PPG 06 Working at demolition and construction sites, will help to minimise the impact of the site clearance and construction phases of the project on the environment. These PPGs/GPPs can be accessed by visiting the NetRegs website at <http://search.netregs.org.uk/search?w=pollution%20prevention%20guidelines>
8. An application form for Consent to discharge under the Water (NI) Order 1999 can be obtained by contacting **NIEA Water Management Unit** at:

17 Antrim Road,
Tonagh,
Lisburn.
BT28 3AL

Or by visiting our website: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/regulating-water-discharges>

Please be advised that applications for discharge Consent take a minimum of four months to determine.
9. It is an offence under section 47 of the Fisheries Act (Northern Ireland) 1966 (as amended) to cause pollution which is subsequently shown to have a deleterious effect on fish stocks.

Final Comments

Effective mitigation measures must be in place to protect the water environment and surrounding water bodies from any discharge into them that may damage ecological status and to ensure that the Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives for the water body are

not compromised nor the WFD objectives in other downstream water bodies in the same and other catchments.

It is an offence under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 to discharge or deposit, whether knowingly or otherwise, any poisonous, noxious or polluting matter so that it enters a waterway or water in any underground strata. Conviction of such an offence may incur a fine of up to £20,000 and / or three months imprisonment.

DAERA Planning Response Team

Klondyke Building

Cromac Avenue

Malone Lower

Belfast

BT7 2JA

T: (028) 9056 9604

E: PlanningResponse.Team@daera-ni.gov.uk

W: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/environmental-advice-planners>

Sep 2016	First Published
Nov 2017	Updated to DAERA Branding; PPG references updated to include new GPP's; new reference to risk assessment procedures.



Department of

**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk



**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**