

Abstracting water? Think before you drill

With river levels and groundwater falling, landowners and businesses with boreholes, wells and springs are being urged to take a few simple steps to make sure they aren't taking too much water.

One of the first things people should do is check their abstraction licence. Restrictions can come into force after periods of dry weather so it is important licence holders know when to stop or reduce the amount of water they abstract. They also need to be aware of any specific conditions that apply.

If you expand your business and require more water or if you want to start abstracting more than 20 cubic metres a day, don't forget to check whether sufficient water is available in your area.

The Environment Agency uses Abstraction Licensing Strategies to help plan the management of water resources. They show where water may be available in various river catchments. People are urged to check first before they apply for a licence. Further details can be found at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Caz Lane, senior environment officer (Water Resources), at the Environment Agency said:

It is essential licence conditions are complied with to help protect the environment.

Failure to do so is an offence and can result in enforcement action.

We are undertaking spot checks to ensure licence holders remain compliant.

Illegal abstraction is on the increase in some parts of the Westcountry where boreholes are drilled without the appropriate permission. Prospective abstractors should first contact the Environment Agency that can advise landowners and businesses on how to stay compliant with UK legislation.

Abstractors and their contractors are responsible for ensuring boreholes or wells are designed, constructed, tested, operated and decommissioned without polluting groundwater or impacting the surrounding surface water environment. So 'Think before you Drill!'

Note to editors:

- Anyone intending to abstract more than 20 cubic metres per day from a

groundwater source needs an abstraction licence. They are also likely to need a groundwater investigation consent (GIC) under section 32 of the Water Resources Act and need to notify the British Geological Survey (BGS) if they intend to drill deeper than 15 metres.

- 1 cubic metre of water is 219.9 gallons or 1000 litres.
- If you have any queries please contact the Environment Agency on 03708 506506