

Detailed guide: Measure, record and report your water abstraction

Measure your water abstraction

Most licences require you to [accurately measure and report the quantity of water you abstract](#). The Environment Agency will discuss these requirements with you while they determine your application.

You need to measure and record the amount of water you abstract so you can keep within the limits allowed in your licence. If you think you need to abstract more than your maximum quantity, you must tell the Environment Agency straight away. There is no guarantee that we will be able to increase the maximum quantity your licence allows you to abstract.

We need accurate records of how much water is taken so we can:

- ensure society's need for water is balanced with that needed to maintain a healthy aquatic environment
- allocate spare resources to other abstractors
- charge some abstractors based on how much water they take
- check compliance with licence conditions
- provide information on water usage

Report your water abstraction

Your abstraction licence will tell you how often you need to record the amount of water you abstract. Most licences will also ask you to submit a record of your actual abstraction (known as 'returns') to the Environment Agency.

Even if you have not taken any water, you must submit a 'nil' return if your licence states that you must report your water use.

If you do not submit your record of actual abstraction when required to do so, we may take enforcement action.

If you spray irrigate and hold a two part tariff billing agreement your charges are partially calculated on the amount of water abstracted. To gain the full financial benefits of this agreement it is important that you submit your return, even if you have not abstracted any water.

Submit your water abstraction returns

You can submit your water abstraction returns using forms supplied by the Environment Agency or use their online reporting system called Generic Operator Returns (GOR).

[Submit water abstraction returns.](#)

Contact the Environment Agency

General enquiries

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Minicom (for the hard of hearing)
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