

Detailed guide: Waste: environmental permits

Updated: You can now apply online for most standard rules environmental permits.

You may need to apply to the Environment Agency for an environmental permit if your business uses, recycles, treats, stores or disposes of waste or mining waste. This permit can be for activities at one site or for mobile plant that can be used at many sites.

You are breaking the law if you operate without a permit when you should have one.

There is separate guidance on how to [register as a waste carrier](#) if you are a waste transporter, buyer, seller, broker or dealer.

Ways you can meet the requirement

If you are carrying out a waste activity, you can meet the permit requirement using one of the following:

- a 'regulatory position statement' – the Environment Agency does not currently require a permit for that activity
- an 'exemption' – you do not need a permit for the activity, but you must still register your exemption with the Environment Agency
- a 'standard rules permit' – a set of fixed rules for common activities
- a 'bespoke permit' – tailored to your business activities

Check if your activity is covered by a regulatory position statement

A [regulatory position statement \(RPS\)](#) means that the Environment Agency will not normally take enforcement action against you if you have not applied for a permit provided:

- your activity meets the description set out in the RPS
- you comply with the conditions of the RPS
- your activity does not (or is not likely) to cause [environmental pollution](#) or harm human health

Each RPS has an expiry date. You should check with the Environment Agency before this expiry date to make sure they have not withdrawn the RPS. If they have, you may need to register an exemption or apply for a permit for your activity.

Check for an RPS if you are:

- [using waste](#)
- [treating waste](#)
- [disposing of waste](#)
- [storing waste](#)

Check if there is an exemption for your activity

Check for an exemption if you are:

- [using waste](#)
- [treating waste](#)
- [disposing of waste](#)
- [storing waste](#)

If your activity is covered by an exemption you will need to [register it as exempt](#).

Each exemption has specific limits and conditions you need to follow. If you do not, the Environment Agency can cancel or 'deregister' your exemption.

Check if you can get a standard rules permit

You can apply for a standard rules permit if your operation meets the relevant description and rules, but:

- you cannot change (vary) the rules and you have no right of appeal against them
- if you want to change your operations and so will not meet the criteria of the standard permit anymore, you will have to apply to make it a bespoke permit instead
- if there is a change in your local environment after your permit has been issued (for example a change in the definition of a [groundwater source protection zone](#)) you may need to apply to change your permit

Read the standard rules if your activity involves:

- [keeping or transferring waste](#)
- [biological treatment of waste](#)
- [metal recovery or scrap metal](#)
- [materials recovery and recycling](#)
- [recovery or use of waste on land](#)
- [treatment to produce aggregate or construction materials](#)
- [onshore oil and gas exploration and mining waste operations](#)

Applying for a standard rules permit is quicker and costs less than a bespoke permit, but if you do not meet the conditions for the standard rules permits you must [apply for a bespoke permit](#).

How to apply for a standard rules environmental

permit

You can apply online for most standard rules environmental permits.

Apply for a standard rules environmental permit.

How to apply for a bespoke permit

You must apply for a bespoke permit if your operation does not fit the conditions of a standard rules permit.

Before you apply you must do all the following:

- check you meet the [legal operator and competency requirements](#) (including technical competency)
- develop a [management system](#) (a written set of procedures that identifies and minimises the risks of pollution)
- complete a [risk assessment](#)
- design your facility to [avoid and control emissions](#)
- check the [technical guidance](#)

If you are applying for a waste recovery permit to permanently deposit waste on land, you must also read the guidance on [waste recovery plans and permits](#).

Bespoke permits: application forms

Download and fill in forms:

- [part A: about you](#)
- [part B2: new bespoke permit](#)
- [part B4: new bespoke waste operation](#) or [part B5: new bespoke mining waste operation](#)
- [part F1: opra, charges and declarations](#)

When you send your application you will need to include:

- forms part A, part B2, part B4 or part B5, and part F1
- the summary of your management system
- your risk assessment
- any other supporting documents mentioned in the form guidance, for example site maps and plans
- [your fee](#)

Email your completed forms to PSC@environment-agency.gov.uk or post them to:

Permitting and Support Centre

Environmental Permitting Team

Quadrant 2

99 Parkway Avenue

Parkway Business Park

Sheffield

S9 4WF

Get help with your application

The Environment Agency offers basic pre-application advice to help you complete your application. This basic advice is free because the cost of providing it is included in the application charge.

For standard rules, mobile plant and bespoke permits the basic service covers the following advice (where applicable):

- which standard rules set is relevant for your activities
- helping you check that your activity meets the criteria for a standard rules permit
- carrying out nature and heritage conservation screening
- which application forms and guidance to use
- information about any administrative tasks the Environment Agency will need to do

For bespoke permits, the basic service also includes advice about risk assessments you may need to do to accompany your application.

If you need more in depth advice about your application the Environment Agency offers an enhanced pre-application advice service. The enhanced service costs £100 an hour plus VAT. The enhanced service can include face to face meetings and advice on:

- complex modelling
- preparing risk assessments
- parallel tracking complex permits with planning applications
- specific substances assessments
- monitoring requirements (including baseline)

The Environment Agency will give you a written estimate before they start work. This will include:

- a breakdown of the work they will carry out with costs
- when these costs will be charged

Getting pre-application advice will help you submit a good quality application that can be processed (determined) smoothly and quickly.

[Complete the pre-application advice form](#) if you want to request either basic (free), or enhanced (chargeable) pre-application advice.

If you cannot access the form please [contact the Environment Agency](#) and they can send you a paper copy to complete and return.

Keeping sensitive information confidential

When the Environment Agency [consults on your permit application](#) they will let people see the information in your application.

You can ask the Environment Agency not to make public any information that is commercially sensitive for your business (such as financial information). You can do this by including a letter with your application that gives your reasons why you do not want this information made public.

The Environment Agency will email or write to you within 20 days if they agree to your request. They will let you know if they need more time to decide.

If they do not agree to your request they will tell you:

- how to appeal against its decision
- how to withdraw your application

Fees and charges

You must pay a fee to apply for a permit.

You must send your fee with your application. If your application is successful, the Environment Agency will charge you an annual 'subsistence' fee while you have a permit. This fee depends on your activity and the type of permit you have.

Find out more about [fees and charges](#). You can [contact the Environment Agency](#) for help to work out your fee.

After you apply

The Environment Agency may reject your application if, for example:

- you have not used the right forms
- you have forgotten to include the fee or sent the wrong fee
- you have not provided important information

Once the Environment Agency has the information they need to start assessing your application, they will contact you and tell you that your application is 'duly made'. This means they are starting the assessment process. They may still request more information if they need it to complete their assessment.

Consultations on bespoke permit applications

The Environment Agency will [publish online](#) a notice of your application and instructions for how other people can see and comment on it.

Members of the public and anyone interested in the application have 20 working days to comment.

The Environment Agency may also consult other public bodies, for example local authorities, Public Health England, water companies, and Natural England.

If the Environment Agency considers your application to be of high public interest, they may:

- take longer to give you a decision
- carry out an extra consultation on the draft decision
- advertise the application more widely

The Environment Agency's [public participation statement](#) explains how and why they will consult on permit applications.

Decisions about your permit

You should get a decision on your application within 13 weeks. The Environment Agency will tell you if your application will take longer.

You can appeal if the Environment Agency refuses your application.

You can also appeal if you've applied for a bespoke permit and you're not happy with the conditions.

The decision letter will explain how you can appeal.

The Environment Agency will publish the decision on its [public register](#).

When you get your permit

Find out [how the Environment Agency will regulate you](#) when you start operating.

If you have been issued a mobile plant permit the Environment Agency must agree to the deployment of the plant before you operate. Deployment forms for standard rules permits are available on the same page as the standard rules themselves.

Apply to deploy mobile plant for bespoke activities using [form MPD1](#).

Change, transfer or cancel your permit

When you have got your permit, you can:

- change (vary) the details on it
- transfer it to someone else
- cancel (surrender) it

Find out how to [change, transfer or cancel your permit](#).

Contact the Environment Agency

Contact the Environment Agency if:

- you need help with your application
- you're not sure if you need a permit

General enquiries

National Customer Contact Centre
PO Box 544
Rotherham
S60 1BY

Email

enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Telephone

03708 506 506

Telephone from outside the UK (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm GMT)

+44 (0) 114 282 5312

Minicom (for the hard of hearing)

03702 422 549

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm