

The discharge of water from heat exchange systems used to heat or cool single domestic properties

If you comply with the requirements below you do not need a permit for the discharge of water from heat exchange systems.

Background

We have seen the deployment of increasing numbers of heat exchange systems used to heat or cool domestic properties. The discharge of water from heat exchangers may in some circumstances require a permit under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

Environment Agency approach

A permit is not required where:

- the heat exchange system is an open-loop system used to heat or cool a single domestic property;
- the water is abstracted from, and discharged to, the same surface-water body (a river or stream and not a lake or pond);
- cleaning chemicals are not discharged to the surface water;
- the property is not used for commercial purposes.

A permit is not required because, by meeting the above criteria, we can be confident that the discharge is not a water discharge activity. A larger discharge from a group of houses may, in some circumstances, be a water discharge activity. Operators proposing larger systems should consult us when they are designing the system to determine whether a permit is required and to take account of any permit requirements in the design

An abstraction of more than 20 cubic metres per day for any use, including heat exchange, will require an abstraction licence.

Enforcement

We may take enforcement action if the activity has caused, or is likely to cause, pollution or harm to health. For a more detailed explanation of this enforcement position, please refer to

the public interest factors in *Enforcement and Sanctions Guidance*. This can be found on the 'How we regulate you' page in the Business & Industry section of our web site <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/regulation/31851.aspx>.

This regulatory position will be reviewed by 19th January 2016.

MWRP RPS
Version: 1
Issued: August 2010

This document is out of date and was withdrawn (01/02/2016)

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