

# **Working Together Agreement between the Environment Agency and Public Health England (PHE)**

## **Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010**

This is a Working Together Agreement as described in '*Working together: your role in our environmental permitting*', the Environment Agency public participation statement made under the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010. This is for operational use in England.

### **What we want to achieve by working together on permitting decisions:**

- protection of public health in relation to activities prescribed under the Environmental Permitting Regulations;
- a risk based approach to permitting and to requests for further information in connection with applications; and
- better public awareness of the relationship between the Environment Agency and Public Health England (PHE).

**Roles and Responsibilities** (of each participating organisation): The Environment Agency is one of the regulators under the Environmental Permitting (England & Wales) Regulations 2010 and has responsibility for the permitting of certain industrial, waste management, surface water and groundwater discharge activities and radioactive substances activities specified in the Regulations.

Under the Regulations, the Environment Agency has responsibility for regulatory measures contributing to the implementation of European Directives; and

Public Health England provides health protection advice to government and its agencies.

### **How we will work together with the Public Health England.**

#### **Generally we will:**

- work together to ensure that statutory deadlines are met;
- share information as appropriate;
- use electronic media rather than paper;
- meet on a six monthly basis to review the effectiveness of our working together;
- share information about future regulatory changes and priorities; and
- review the agreement annually.

#### **The Environment Agency will:**

- consult PHE on applications for installation and waste operation bespoke permits (and variations which entail a substantial change) in accordance with an agreed screening criteria. The criteria will be reviewed periodically and be publicly available. Substantial change is defined in the Regulations at Schedule 5, Part 1, para 5(5). It only concerns changes which may have a significant negative effect. PHE are being consulted in addition to Directors of Public Health in England.

- consult PHE for activities involving radioactive substances:
  - new nuclear sites (for example - new nuclear power stations, even if on an existing nuclear site) regardless of the estimated doses;
  - existing nuclear sites where the discharge limits or critical group doses are increasing and the estimated doses from the site exceed 20 micro Sv in a year;
  - on such applications for non-nuclear sites as may be agreed from time to time between partner agencies.
- take account of responses received within 20 working days, as required to meet the statutory deadlines;
- alert the appropriate organisations if further information on an application becomes available during the determination which may be important to them; and
- subject to national security considerations, provide timely alerts of permit condition breaches resulting in significant releases and/or significant exposures.

**The Public Health England will:**

- comment on the applicants' public health risk assessments for chemicals and radiation and provide advice to the Environment Agency as soon as possible and within 20 working days of receiving a copy;
- provide health advice that is clear, concise and based on best available evidence and expert judgement;
- where appropriate, develop sector specific position statements for regulated activities to facilitate timely provision of nationally consistent information and advice; and
- work closely with the Environment Agency locally to communicate health risk to the public in relation to emissions from regulated activities.

Signed.....



Date.....

4th December 2013

Dr John Harrison, Director, Centre for Radiation, Chemicals and Environmental Hazards – CRCE, Public Health England

Signed.....



Date.....

4th December 2013

Ed Mitchell, Director of Environment and Business, Environment Agency