

Application for a water resources licence – part B

Guidance notes on form WR346



Introduction

Please read through these guidance notes and the application form carefully before you fill the form in.

These guidance notes give you information to help you fill in part B (form WR346) of your application for a water resources licence. If you get your application right first time, we can process it more quickly. Please follow the guidance below to help avoid delays in your application.

If you are not sure about anything in the form, phone us on 03708 506506 or email us at enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk.

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B1 Applicant's name, site name and type of licence you are applying for

B1.1 Give the name of the company, person, organisation or public body who will be the licence holder. This must be the same as the name given at A3, A4, A5 or A6 (as appropriate) in part A of the form.

B1.2 Give the site name at which the current abstraction(s) is taking place. This will help us to identify application sites submitted by one applicant for a number of different sites.

Only one part A needs to be completed if you operate from a number of different sites. In this case you will need to complete one Part B for each site.

B1.3 Type of licence being applied for.

Please indicate whether you are applying for a full licence or transfer licence for this abstraction at this site.

Please refer to A1 of the guidance note WR345 form part A, for an explanation of the different types of licences available.

If you operate at a number of different sites and are applying for more than one licence you only need to fill in one part A. So for multiple sites we need to understand the activity and abstraction that is taking place at this site.

B1.4 Give the date that you first started abstracting water at your site. We only need the year in which you started abstracting. If you use the water for multiple purposes and started abstracting at different periods please continue on a separate sheet and provide a document reference.

B2 Existing licence number(s)

Only fill in this section if you are applying to make changes to an existing licence. For example if you wish to add your current exempt abstraction to an existing licence. In this case, give us your existing licence number. In the box give a brief description of the changes you are making.

B3 Other applications (planned abstractions)

Use this section to provide details of any other abstraction licences (on this site) you are applying for, or will be applying for within the next 2 years, following the removal of the exemption. A planned abstraction is for water that you are not currently abstracting but intend (and have a plan) to abstract in the near future. A plan may include existing planning permission for a quarry operation not yet worked or an agreed contract to purchase land to enable trickle irrigation of crops. The list is not exhaustive so we ask that you provide further details here. If you need to continue on a separate sheet please provide a document reference.

B4 Source of supply

B4.1 Please tick the relevant box to tell us whether you abstract from either surface water or groundwater (sources are surface water unless otherwise indicated).

B4.2 Use the list below to tell us which of the following type of abstraction point you are abstracting from.

Please enter one of the following options. If you are not sure which option to choose, get advice from us.

Groundwater

- Adit (mine)
- Borehole
- Excavation (unlined)
- Groundwater - fed lagoon
- Mineshaft
- Mixed groundwater
- Seepage catchpit
- Well
- Wellpoints

Surface water

- Bypass channel
- Canal
- Ditch
- Drain
- Excavation (lined)
- Lagoon
- Lake
- Leat
- Millpond
- Mixed surface water
- Pond
- Reservoir
- River
- Stream
- Tidal waters
- Unspecified

B4.3 Tell us the type of business or activity at the site you abstract water from.

We need this information to give the Government reports on water usage.

B4.4 Name of the watercourse

Only answer this question if you want to abstract from surface water. Give the name of the watercourse.

B4.5 Locations you abstract water from

Fill in Table 1 to give details of where you abstract water from. If you are only abstracting from surface water after completing this question go to B5.

In the first column, give the name of each abstraction location.

In the second column, tell us the type of location – single point, reach (a length of watercourse along which you abstract water at any place) or area (where you may abstract water from any place within a marked boundary).

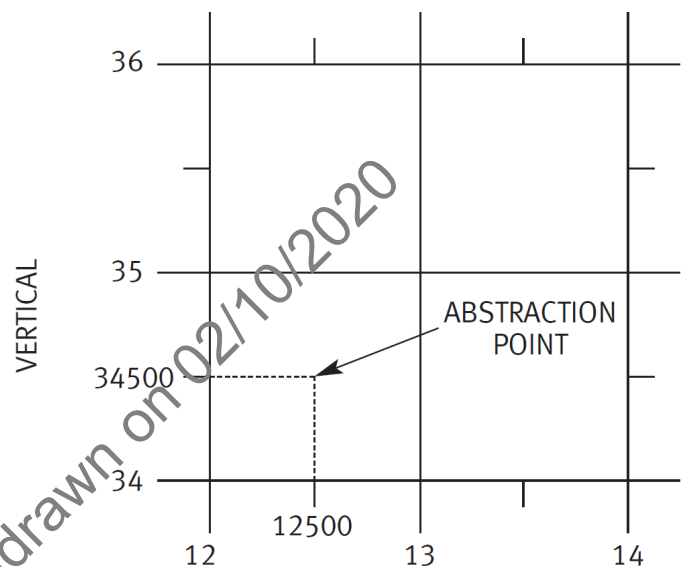
In the third, fourth, fifth and sixth columns give the 12-digit national grid references for the abstraction location.

- If the abstraction location is a single point, it will have only one national grid reference, so you only need to fill in the third column for that location.
- If the abstraction location is a reach, you need to fill in the third column and the fourth column with the national grid references you abstract water between.
- If the abstraction location is an area, you need to fill in the third, fourth, fifth and sixth columns with the national grid references for the corners of the area. The national grid reference in the third column should be the one you gave for the top left-hand corner (point A). The national grid reference in the fourth column should be the one you gave for the second corner. In the same way, move clockwise around the area and provide all the national grid references.

To find out the 12-digit national grid references you can search on the UK grid reference finder website at www.gridreferencefinder.com, or use a 1:10,000 scale map as shown here:

- Read the two letters identifying the 100,000-metre square. This will be shown on the front cover of the map. In this example we will assume the letters are ST.
- Mark the abstraction location on the map.

- Find the first vertical line to the left of your proposed abstraction and read the number labelling it. In this example it is 12. If you imagine the line between 12 and 13 is split into 10 sections, estimate how many sections across the box your abstraction location is. In this example it is five, and the first part of the 12-digit national grid reference is ST 12500.
- Find the first horizontal line below your proposed abstraction and read the number labelling it. In this example it is 34. If you imagine the line between 34 and 35 is split into 10 sections, estimate how many sections up the box your abstraction location is. In this example it is five, and the final numbers of the 12-digit national grid reference is 34500.
- The full national grid reference is ST 12500 34500.



B4.6 Only answer questions B4.6 and B4.7 if you are abstracting from groundwater.

Underground rocks that hold water are known as aquifers. Please tell us the type of aquifer/rock you are abstracting water from. Examples of these are: sandstone, chalk, oolites and limestone. If you are not sure about this, get advice from us.

B4.7 Fill in Table 2 to give details of where you will abstract water from:

In the first column tell us the relevant references to groundwater abstractions labelled on the map you need to send with your application.

In the second and third column, tell us the depth and diameter of each well, borehole, wellpoint, shaft or excavation.

In the fourth column, tell us if it is lined, the type and thickness of the lining.

In the fifth column, tell us the depth of the pump (either in mAoD or in metres below ground level).

In the sixth and seventh column, tell us the water level when the borehole, wellpoint, shaft or excavation is not being pumped i.e. at rest and the water level when it is being pumped (either in mAoD or in metres below ground level).

In the eighth column, tell us whether you prevent any leaks or overflow from any artesian works, and if so, how you do this.

B5 Rights of access and planning permission

To be able to apply for a licence to abstract water under the Transitional Regulations you must have a right of access to:

- the land directly adjoining the surface water
- the land the aquifer containing the groundwater is on

Fill in Table 3 to confirm your access rights and details of any planning permission(s):

In the first column, give the name of each abstraction location. You must use the same names as you gave in B4.2.

In the second column, confirm your access rights to each abstraction point(s), by answering either 'Yes' or 'No'. We may ask you for a copy of the document giving you those rights, such as:

- a deed of grant or lease of rights
- a conveyance, lease or tenancy agreement

In the third column, tell us whether you need planning permission by answering either 'Yes' or 'No'. If you answer 'No' go to B6.

In the fourth column, tell us the status of any planning permission; for example, permission granted, application pending. Please send us a copy of any environmental statements/reports you sent in to support your application for planning permission. We only need the sections of the reports which relate to the abstraction or use of water, i.e. environmental and hydrological impacts.

We also need to see the section of your planning permission where conditions (if any) have been imposed as part of the planning permission you have been granted. Again, we only need to see information relating to the environmental or hydrological impacts.

In the fifth column, give us the date that any planning permission is due to expire or reviewed.

B6 Evidence of abstraction

Please describe the type of previously exempt abstraction that has been taking place on site.

These previously exempt activities (where the abstraction is more than 20 cubic metres per day), include:

- transferring water from one inland water system to another in the course of, or as the result of, operations carried out by a navigation, harbour or conservancy authority
- abstraction of water into internal drainage districts
- dewatering mines, quarries and engineering works
- warping (abstraction of water containing silt for deposit onto agricultural land so that the silt acts as a fertiliser)
- all forms of irrigation (other than spray irrigation, which is already licensable), and the use of land drainage systems in reverse to maintain field water levels
- abstractions within currently geographically exempt areas
- abstraction undertaken by the Crown or Ministry of Defence (excluding the Sovereign and the Duchies of Cornwall and Lancaster, in their private capacity)

To apply for a licence you need to be able to demonstrate that abstraction has taken place at any time during the seven-year qualifying period preceding the removal of the exemptions. Examples of evidence include meter readings, invoices for equipment, photos of infrastructure, or business receipts/contracts.

This will be used as evidence that you qualify for a licence under the transitional regulations, which are different from the standard application process.

If you are unable to demonstrate that you have abstracted during the seven-year qualifying period preceding the removal of the exemptions you will need to apply for an abstraction licence through the standard process. If this is the case, use the guidance and forms to apply for a water abstraction licence on

the GOV.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/water-management-apply-for-a-water-abstraction-or-impoundment-licence>.

The first column, lists the calendar years for the seven year qualifying period under the transitional arrangement. Use the rows within each year, as applicable, to provide the information to support your application.

Fill in Table 4 as follows:

In the second column, tell us what you are using the water for. Please enter one of the following options by utilising the drop down list. If you are not sure which options to choose, get advice from us. If there is more than one intended use for the water from an abstraction location, use a different line for each purpose.

Animal watering and welfare (non farming)
Boiler feed
Conveying materials
Creating and maintaining water meadows
Dewatering
Domestic purposes (commercial)
Domestic purposes (private residential property)
Dust suppression
Effluent or slurry dilution
Evaporative cooling
Filling reservoir for subsequent spray irrigation
Filling reservoir for subsequent trickle irrigation
Filling reservoir for subsequent spray irrigation (frost protection)
Flood irrigation (not including warping and pest control)
Flood irrigation (Pest Control)
Flood irrigation (warping)
Gas suppression or scrubbing
General farming (except irrigation)
General farming (except irrigation) & domestic
General or process washing
Heat pump
Horticultural watering (except spray and trickle irrigation)
Hydraulic fracturing (fracking)
Hydraulic rams
Hydraulic testing
Hydroelectric power generation
Impounding
Laundry Use
Maintaining flow through a fish farm
Maintaining flow through a canal
Maintaining flow through a canoe pass
Maintaining flow through a cress pond/farm
Maintaining flow through a fish pass
Maintaining flow through a lake or pond
Maintaining flow through a leat
Make-up or top-up water
Milling and water power other than generating electricity
Mineral washing
Non-evaporative cooling
Ornamental garden watering (not irrigation)
Pollution remediation
Private water supply
Private water undertaking

- Process water
- Public water supply
- Public water supply – storage
- Raw (untreated) water supply to a third party
- River recirculation
- Spray irrigation
- Spray irrigation (frost protection)
- Transfer from one source of supply to another
- Trickle irrigation
- Vegetable washing
- Water bottling
- Water wheels not use for power generation
- Wet fencing OR Nature conservation

In the third column, tell us whether the activity you are applying for is taking water from a surface water (S) or a groundwater (G) source.

In the fourth column, please ensure that the relevant references to your abstraction point are labelled on the map you send with your application, to identify each point of abstraction.

In the fifth column, tell us the annual start and end date of your abstraction. Please state this as specific dates, months, number of days abstraction has taken place or simply all year.

In the sixth, seventh, and eighth column, for each purpose, give the maximum amount of water you have abstracted on an annual, daily and hourly basis during the seven-year qualifying period, in cubic metres.

In the ninth column, tell us if you have estimated the quantities previously abstracted (E) or the figures provided are actual measurements (A). You will need to provide evidence as to how you have estimated or assessed the quantities applied for.

In the tenth column, tell us the average daily abstracted quantities you have previously abstracted.

In the eleventh column, for each purpose, give the maximum rate (in litres per second) that you abstract at any given moment.

In the twelfth column, for each purpose, give the maximum number of hours each day you abstract.

B6.2 Use this section to provide comprehensive details of the way your abstraction or transfer is taking place. This should include the following:

- Evidence that abstraction has taken place during the qualifying period
- The measures you are using to calculate the volumes in your application
- The record/evidence you are using to support your application. For example, water level over weir, pump rating, calibrated gauge, flow output for head curve
- A written description of the activity, including any photographs if applicable
- A detailed description of each control structure. This should include information on how they work/operate (including dimensions, levels and ratings), who owns the structure, who operates it, and where in your system of abstraction is your flow gauging/assessment/measuring point
- A detailed description of the means of abstraction at each abstraction location. This includes abstractions or transfers via pumped and/or gravity flow

Each of the above points should be referenced to a diagram or schematic detailing the scheme through abstraction, process

and discharge. The following is a non-exhaustive list of the information required:

- Directional flow of water
- Control structures
- Abstraction points
- Discharge points
- Overflows
- Pumping stations
- Rising mains/sumps
- Weirs/slucices
- Dam works
- Compensation channels
- Flow splitters
- Storage tanks
- Ponds and whether they are lined
- Reservoirs and whether they are lined.

The conversion table below will help you to give your answer in cubic metres.

1 hectare	2.471 acres
1 acre	0.4047 hectare
1 millimetre	0.0394 inches
1 inch	25.4 millimetres
1 metre	3.2808 feet
1 foot	0.3048 metres
1 cubic metre	1,000 litres
1 cubic metre	219.969 gallons
1 gallon	4.54609 litres
1,000 gallons	4.54609 cubic metres
1 acre inch	22,610 gallons
1 acre inch	102.787 cubic metres

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary and provide a document reference.

B7 Transfer of water to maintain a water level

The abstraction of water for the purpose of transferring it from one source of supply to another (with or without intervening use) solely or mainly in order to enhance the latter is no longer exempt from licensing. If you abstract water to maintain water levels in a water-level-dependent environment, lake, pond etc. please provide details of why and how you carry out this activity. Tell us the full details of the transfer, what the levels are that need to be maintained, if and how they vary on a seasonal basis, how they relate to the quantity of water abstracted, and how you control water levels. The more information you provide us at this stage the more it will help us in making a decision on your application.

Continue on a separate sheet if required and provide a document reference.

B8 Dewatering operations

Dewatering is a process to drain water from any source of supply in order to allow operations to take place, such as mining, quarrying, building, engineering works, or other operations, whether underground or on the surface.

These abstractions have previously been exempt from licensing control, but most dewatering operations above the threshold of

20 cubic metres per day will now require a licence. In most cases, this will be a transfer licence.

However, if any use of the water is occurring then a full licence will be required. You may need to make two applications, one for a transfer licence and one for a full licence.

Give us the details of the dewatering activities at your site.

These should include:

- A cross-section to show the extent of current workings and future workings
- A plan to show the extent of current and future workings
- A cross-section to show current and planned water table levels
- Capacities of the pumps used and discharge details

Some dewatering operations may have had conservation notices (Section 30 or 199 WRA 1991) issued for them prior to 2006. These were issued if there was concern over the impact that dewatering operations may have on the local environment. If such a notice was issued for your site please provide details here.

The more information you provide us at this stage the more it will help us in making a decision on your application. Continue on a separate sheet if required and provide a document reference.

B9 Method and measurement of abstraction

If you are granted a full licence you will have to install a suitable meter or use some other means of measurement. We may also ask you to do this for transfer licences. If you have any questions about how to measure the abstracted water, get advice from us before you go any further with this application.

You may have a flood defence consent or flood risk activity permit for your operations. If you do, please provide the flood defence consent number or flood risk activity permit number.

Fill in Table 5 to tell us how you will abstract water and measure the abstracted water:

In the first column, tell us the name of the abstraction location.

In the second column, tell us how you abstract the water.

Please give full details of the structure and equipment involved. If you have drawings to illustrate the structure and equipment, send these with the form and provide a document reference.

In the third column, tell us how you measure/assess the amount of water you are abstracting. If you have made an assessment of the quantities you abstract tell us how you have made the assessment. You can find further information regarding a hydrology assessment on our web pages at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency>.

In the fourth column, tell us the reference number of your flood defence consent or flood risk activity permit (if applicable).

B10 Discharge details

B10.1 If you are discharging water that you have abstracted from your site, we need to know the details of any discharges, fill in the Table 6 with the details. We do not need to know details if you only discharge water supplied by your local water company through the mains distribution network and/or you discharge water to the public sewer.

If you don't already have one, you may need an environmental permit from us for this. If you need to discuss whether you need a consent, please phone us on 03708 506 506. Getting an

environmental permit can take up to four months, so it is essential that you contact us as soon as possible.

In the first column, tell us where the water is discharged to. Choose **one** of the options below. If you are not sure about which option to choose, get advice from us.

Borehole	Septic tank
Canal	Sewer
Lake	Soakaway
River	Stream
Sealed cesspit	Tidal water
Seepage lagoon	Well

In the second column, tell us the volume of water, in cubic metres, discharged each day.

In the third column, give the national grid reference of each discharge point and mark each point as clearly as possible on the map you need to send with your application. See B4.4 to find how to look up a grid reference.

In the fourth column, give the environmental permit number (or discharge consent number if issued prior to 2010) or your application number if you are in the process of applying for a permit to discharge water.

B11 Licence duration

When we grant a licence for the first time, it is likely to be for between 6 and 18 years. The licence duration will be based on the Abstraction Licensing Strategies cycle. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/water-abstraction-licensing-strategies-cams-process>). We set the period most licences last for so they run out at the same time as other licences in the area. We may also grant short-duration licences where we think there may be issues with the licence or water availability in the longer term, or if you only need it for a short time. In exceptional circumstances, we may consider granting licences with a longer duration (up to 24 years maximum). This will only be considered as long as you can show, through a business case, that your abstraction meets all four Government stated requirements (which are set out in WR253). (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wr253-long-duration-water-abstraction-licences>). You must supply your business case for a long duration licence with your application otherwise your application will be rejected.

Please be aware that the Abstraction Reform Programme will remove time limits from abstraction licences in the near future so this option will be extremely limited.

If you want to set the period your licence is valid for, give the end date. Then use the box provided to explain why you want that licence period. If there is not enough space, continue on a separate sheet and send it with this form with a document reference.

B12 Other abstractions

In Table 7 tell us about any other abstraction(s) undertaken by you and whether these are exempt abstraction (i.e. less than 20 cubic metres per day), a pending application or already licensed:

In the first column, tell us the purpose of the abstraction; for example, spray irrigation.

In the second column, tell us where you abstract the water from. Indicate whether it is surface or groundwater using a 12-digit national grid reference (see B4.4).

In the third column, tell us where you use the water or where you transfer it to.

In the fourth column, tell us the period when you abstract the water (for example, 1 November to 31 March inclusive).

In the fifth column, tell us the abstraction licence number (if it is already licensed) or the application number (if it is pending).

B12.2 Name of the watercourse

Tell us about any other abstractions that you undertake at your site, including any abstractions for less than 20 cubic metres per day.

In the first column, tell us what the water is used for.

In the second column, tell us the annual quantity of water that you abstract (take).

In the third column, tell us the daily quantity of water that you abstract.

In the fourth column, tell us the quantities of water you abstract on an hourly basis (in cubic metres).

You can find help in determining the quantities of water by visiting our webpage at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-abstraction-application-for-a-water-resources-licence>. Alternatively if you know the capacity of your pump you can multiply this by the length of time that it is run to determine the hourly, daily and annual quantities.

B13 Licence aggregation details

If you require more than one licence we can aggregate the abstraction quantities across licences. If you operate in this way, each licence will have an individual abstraction limit linked to that purpose, but there will also be an overall limit on the total amount you can abstract under all licences. That total may be less than the sum of the individual abstraction limits.

B13.1 If the licence you are applying for should be aggregated with any other licence(s), give the licence numbers of those other licences.

Then explain how you currently aggregate your abstraction quantities. Continue on a separate sheet if required and provide a document reference.

B14 Management agreements

We need to know whether you have entered into a management agreement with Natural England. If you do have such an agreement, please give us the details in the space provided. Continue on a separate sheet if required and provide a document reference.

B15 Environmental impact assessment (EIA)

The Water Resources (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003 (subsequently amended in 2006 and 2017), require that for certain water resource proposals, which meet the description of a “relevant project”, an environmental statement (ES) is prepared to support the application for the proposal.

The project is a ‘relevant’ project if:

- it is a water management project for agriculture, including irrigation (all forms)
- projects involving water abstraction and the amount abstracted in a continuous operation or a series of operations exceeds 20 m³ in any 24 hour period
- it would be likely to have “significant” effects on the environment due to its nature, size or location

As such, where we determine an EIA is required and the water management project requires an abstraction licence, then an ES must be supplied to support the application, unless already covered by other EIA Regulations e.g. Town and Country Planning.

In the case of previously exempt abstraction activities, such as trickle irrigation, there was a legal requirement for operators to obtain consent from the Environment Agency/Natural Resources Wales (NRW) prior to commencement of these operations, where the Regulations apply. The consent can include appropriate conditions to mitigate against significant environmental effects.

Some operators may not have complied with this requirement and have continued abstracting without our consent, potentially having significant effects on the environment. This is an offence under the WR (EIA) regulations.

When we receive your application, we will accept it as valid if all the basic information is included. We will then screen your applications to establish whether it is a relevant project as part of the determination exercise, and, if we conclude it is relevant then we may ask you for an ES at this stage.

B16 Safe passage for eels

The European eel is a migratory species that breeds out at sea and returns to our rivers to grow and mature. Numbers of European eel have been declining since the 1980s. Scientists estimate that, across Europe, numbers of young eel returning to our rivers have fallen to less than 5% of 1980s levels and populations are no longer sustainable.

European and UK legislation introduced since 2007 aims to protect eel stocks and return them to sustainable levels. The Eels (England & Wales) Regulations 2009 specifically protects the passage of eel through our rivers. It provides the Environment Agency with powers to require persons responsible for obstructions to eel passage to construct an eel pass. It requires persons responsible for diversion structures to screen their structure to prevent the entrainment of eel. For more information go to:

- The Eels (England & Wales) Regulations 2009
- The Eel Manual: an overview
- Elver & Eel Passes
- Screening at intakes and outfalls: measures to protect eel

Tell us if you have been in discussion with Environment Agency Fisheries staff regarding whether your abstraction needs to be screened to ensure that eels are protected or whether an eel pass is required.

If you have design drawings or details continue on a separate sheet if required and provide a document reference.

B17 Supporting documents

Please read through the checklist and tick all the items you have enclosed. If you do not enclose all the items we need, we may return your application.

B18 Application fee

When you send us your application, you will need to pay an application fee. The current amount is set out on our website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/environment-agency-charging-schemes>. Alternatively please phone us on 03708 506 506.

We cannot process your application if you do not enclose the correct fee.

If you are paying by cheque, please make it payable to 'Environment Agency' and make sure they have 'A/c Payee' written across them if it is not already printed on.

Please write the name of your company and application reference number on the back of your cheque. We will not accept cheques with a future date on them.

Payment by credit or debit card: We can accept payments by Visa, MasterCard or Maestro cards only. Please complete the required details in the separate form CC1 or tick the box asking us to call you to arrange payment.

B19 Declaration and signature

Check the form thoroughly and complete the checklist before signing this form.

Any licence we issue is a legal document, and you could be prosecuted if any of the information you have provided is knowingly incorrect.

The application must be signed by the appropriately authorised person.

B20 The Data Protection Act 1998

This section provides details of how we will use the information you provide.

B21 Commercial confidentiality and national security

Commercial confidentiality

Only tick this box if you are certain that you want us to treat any information from your application as commercially confidential and leave it off the public register of abstraction and impoundment licence applications or a public notice relating to a licence application.

With this application, enclose a copy of your supporting statement explaining which information you want us to treat as commercially confidential, and why. We have 14 days to make a decision on commercial confidentiality. If we do not do so in this period, we will be considered to have decided that the information is commercially confidential.

Make sure that we can easily identify the information you consider to be commercially confidential. It will help us if the information you want us to leave off the public register and notice is provided to us in a way which will allow it to be easily removed (for example, on separate pages marked 'claimed commercially confidential').

National security

You cannot ask us to leave information from your application off the public register or a public notice because including it would be a national security risk. Only the Secretary of State can make this decision. If you want any information to be left off the public register for national security reasons, write to the Secretary of State at:

Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR.

With your application, enclose a letter stating that you have written to the Secretary of State. We will not be able to progress your application until we receive the Secretary of State's decision on what information should be left out of the notice and the public register. This will probably delay your application.

B22 Where to send the forms

Check this form and part A thoroughly and complete the checklist before sending them to the address shown.

All applications for a previously exempt abstraction must be received and validated by the Environment Agency by 31st December 2019. You are therefore encouraged to make an early application to avoid missing this deadline.

B23 Next steps

When we receive your application we will take your payment. This does not guarantee that your application will be accepted as a valid application. We will aim to acknowledge your application within three months of receipt and if we require further information we will ask you for it then. If your abstraction does not fall under the list of activities or areas that were previously exempt from licensing we will contact you to let you know and refund your payment. Due to the high number of applications that the Environment Agency expects to receive from previously exempt abstractors, we have up to three years to determine licence applications. You will be able to continue to abstract water until we make a decision on your application.