



### What are surface waters and groundwater?

Surface waters include rivers, lakes, lochs, loughs, reservoirs, ponds, streams, canals, ditches, coastal waters and estuaries. Groundwater is all water which is below the surface of the ground in the saturation zone (that is, below the water table) and in direct contact with the ground or subsoil.

In England, Wales and Scotland surface waters and groundwater are collectively known as Controlled Waters. However, this term has not been used in this guideline as it has no meaning in Northern Ireland.

### Pollution of surface waters and groundwater

It is an offence for anyone to cause or knowingly permit:

the entry into surface waters or groundwater of solid waste matter, or of poisonous, noxious or polluting matter;

or the discharge of trade and sewage effluent into surface waters or groundwater without prior consent from the Environmental Regulator.

It is not an offence to discharge clean surface water run-off (rain run-off from roofs and yards) to surface waters or groundwater. If there is any risk of run-off being contaminated (for example by oil drips from cars or roofs contaminated by chimney emissions), then it is an offence to discharge the water without a Discharge Consent.

### What is trade effluent?

Trade effluent is any effluent (liquid waste) that is discharged from any premises being used for carrying on a trade or industry. Any liquid, with or without suspended particles, which is wholly/partially produced in the course of any trade or industrial activity carried out at "trade premises" will be classed as trade effluent. The only effluents which are not classed as Trade Effluent are clean, uncontaminated surface water (i.e. clean rainwater which has not been contaminated when running over your site) and domestic sewage.

### Trade effluent can include:

waste chemicals, including oil, liquid process wastes, detergents, condensate water from compressed air installations, cooling water, biodegradable liquids, wash water, liquid wastes or wash waters, other than domestic sewage, discharged using sinks, basins or toilets, and contaminated mine or quarry water

### Does this apply to me?

Trade effluents can be discharged either to foul sewers, or to surface waters or ground waters.

This guideline applies to you if you discharge, intend to discharge or have the potential to discharge any effluent, other than domestic sewage or clean, uncontaminated surface water, from a trade or industrial premises into a foul sewer.

If you discharge or have the potential to discharge any effluents into surface waters or ground waters, you should refer to the Pollution of Surface Waters and Ground Waters Management Guideline.