

PUBLIC REGISTER



fact file



NRA

*National Rivers Authority
North West Region*

Anyone can gain access to detailed information about the NRA's consents to discharge, water quality monitoring and sampling activities in the North West through the authority's Public Register.

The register, which is computerised, contains information dating back to August 1985, when it was first established and records are being constantly updated.

The information contained on the computer covers:

Water quality

Every river is classed according to its quality. There are four categories - good, fair, poor and bad. Every stretch of river, canal and estuary under the NRA's control is given a classification under this system and the Public Register carries the details.

Applications for consents

Any individual or company wishing to discharge effluent into rivers, estuaries, coastal or underground waters must have a "discharge consent" from the NRA.



Consents issued

The Public Register contains details of all the discharge consents issued. Many of these have conditions attached to them which ensures that the discharge does not have a significantly detrimental effect on the water environment.

Consent conditions

The consents generally govern the discharge of effluent by specifying the volume which can be discharged, the amount of suspended solids it can contain and the BOD - the biochemical oxygen demand of the effluent.

Limits on metal, oil, ammonia and other potential pollutants are also imposed to protect water quality and to ensure that the discharge complies with national and European standards.

Sampling

The NRA regularly samples the waters within its control, including consented discharges. The frequency of testing depends on the significance of the discharge.

If samples taken do not meet the consent standards set by the NRA, the authority can take action. In some cases, a breach of consent can lead to prosecution.

The Public Register contains details of all samples taken. Sampling points are fully indexed by place name, river name and National Grid Reference.

The Public Register can be inspected at any time during office hours at the NRA's North West headquarters in Warrington. To arrange an appointment, telephone 0925 53999.



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