

Permits to Pump and Discharges to Watercourses

What happened:

Following a service strike to a live water pipe, an excavation began to fill with water. To avoid the burst pipe being submersed, preventing access and repair, a pump was installed to commence dewatering of the excavation. The resultant waters were discharged to a surface water drain located on the adjacent roadway, which in turn flowed directly to a brook located off-site.

No Permit to Pump was in place for the dewatering activity. A silt sock was also placed on top of the discharge hose, as opposed to being secured over the pipe.



ACTION UNDERTAKEN:

- Following the discovery that the resultant waters had entered the brook via the surface water drain, the pump was immediately turned off.
- The client determined the event as a pollution incident and requested samples to be taken of the brook, to ensure that the ammonia and BOD (Biological Oxygen Demand) levels had not been impacted. No impact to the brook was identified.
- Following the incident, drainage covers were procured to site to prevent future potential contamination of surface water drains.

BEFORE YOU START WORK:

- Is the appropriate Permit to Pump in place?
- Have all surface and foul water drains been identified within the works area? If unsure, assume surface water drain. Where do drains discharge to? Do we have written client permission to discharge?
- Have the correct controls been put in place to protect drains?

For further information see the MWH Treatment procedures, processes and guidance notes:

- [EVGD05-08 Treatment and Disposal of Site Water \(England and Wales\)](#)
- [EVGD01-16 Silt Pollution](#)
- [EVGD01-23 Silt Control Measures](#)
- [EVGD04-12 Silt Pollution Emergency Plan](#)

Permits to Pump and Discharges to Watercourses continued....



What happened:

A MWHT Permit to Pump was in place for dewatering from a cofferdam to ground. The discharge point was to ground adjacent to a French drain at the side of the access road. It was decided, two days prior to the incident, to avoid water pooling on the road to put the discharge directly into the manhole (where the French drain runs through) as dewatering was to continue out of hours. The manhole flows to a chamber in which other flows meet and then in turn flows to the brook, which is approximately 150 metres away.

The question was asked on the morning of the incident whether the water had been tested. This was because there was potential it could be potable water from a leaking pipe. When tested at the discharge point chlorine was detected (0.45mg/l) and levels suggested that there is a leak from a process outlet pipe.

ACTION UNDERTAKEN:

- Dewatering was stopped immediately.
- The client was informed immediately. Both the client and MWH independently reported the incident to the Environment Agency.
- Site Drainage Map was reviewed to identify surface water drains.

BEFORE YOU START WORK:

- Do you have permission from the landowner to discharge dewatering?
- Is there a site drainage plan?
- Determine which Permit to Pump would be required - [To Ground \(EVFR05-03\)](#); [To Surface Waters \(EVFR05-04\)](#) or [Over pumping \(EVFR05-08\)](#).
- Have the correct controls been put in place to protect watercourses?

For further information see the MWH Treatment procedures, processes and guidance notes.

- [EVGD01-15 Site Drainage](#)
- [EVGD04-01 Pollution Prevention Planning](#)
- [EVGD05-07 Working In Or Near Watercourses](#)
- [EVGD04-03 Spill Response and Emergency Plan](#)

