

# regulatory position statement

## The disposal of septic tank and cesspool sludge from domestic dwellings and arisings from blocked sewers

**If you comply with the requirements below, we will allow the disposal of septic tank and cesspool sludge from domestic dwellings into a suitably permitted sewage treatment works. We will also allow the arisings from the clearing of a blocked sewer to be disposed of back into the same sewer network.**

### Background

This RPS covers two scenarios:

1. Septic tank or cesspool waste from houses and other residential buildings is taken by tanker to sewage treatment works and discharged to the works inlet. There is no appropriate exemption from the need for an environmental permit for this activity.
2. In the event of a sewer blockage a tanker is used to empty the contents of the sewer so that flows can be returned and any repairs can be carried out. The tanker then discharges decant liquors back into the network via an alternative manhole. This also requires a permit.

### Our position

We will not pursue an application for an environmental permit for the activity provided:

#### Scenario 1

- The septic tank sludge and/or cesspool wastes come only from domestic premises.
- The sludge is discharged at the sewage treatment works into an inlet valve located on an area that (a) has an impermeable floor capable of containing any spillages and (b) is connected to a sealed drainage system. This drainage system must be designed so that:
  - it collects all liquid run-off from the impermeable floor; and
  - all liquids entering it are collected in a sealed sump (unless they may legally be discharged).

#### Scenario 2

- The decant liquors are only disposed of into the same sewage network from which they were removed.

For both scenarios you must meet the relevant objectives of the Waste Framework Directive;

'... ensuring that waste management is carried out without endangering human health, without harming the environment and in particular:

- (i) without risk to water, air, soil, plants or animals;
- (ii) without causing a nuisance through noise or odours; and
- (iii) without adversely affecting the countryside or places of special interest.'

This position applies to disposal operations only. If you want to carry out recovery of these sludges within the curtilage of a sewage treatment works then you must have registered a paragraph 10<sup>1</sup> or a paragraph T21<sup>2</sup> exemption.

### **Enforcement**

In not pursuing an application for a permit, this means we will not normally take enforcement action unless the activity has caused, or is likely to cause, pollution or harm to health. For a more detailed explanation of this enforcement position, see our **Enforcement and Sanctions Statement**. This can be found on the 'How and Why we Regulate Your Business' page in the Business & Industry section of our web site.

This regulatory position will be reviewed by July 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> under Schedule 3 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2007

<sup>2</sup> under Schedule 3 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010