

**WAT-G-062**

**EASR Guidance: GBR 24: Sheep dipping**

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# Purpose

This document provides information and guidance for anyone carrying out sheep dipping which is authorised by GBR 24 under The Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations.

This guidance does not cover any other permissions that may be required.

# What activity does this guidance apply to?

This guidance applies to operating sheep dip facilities and operating sheep handling facilities where:

* Sheep are held immediately after dipping.
* Pour-on parasite treatments are applied
* Sheep are held immediately after the application of pour-on treatments.

It also provides advice on activities associated with this activity.

# Understanding the risks to the water environment

Sheep dipping can play an important part in the maintenance of good animal welfare. The chemicals used in sheep dips and pour-on treatments are very toxic to the water environment and can have a significant impact on surface and groundwaters. [Groundwater](#_Definitions) is important not only in maintaining river flows but is also a very important source of drinking water, particularly in rural areas and for those on private supplies. Many farms and other businesses such as whisky distilleries are dependent on clean groundwater for watering livestock, crop irrigation and food and drink production.

Further guidance on sheep dipping can be found on the [Farming and Water Scotland website](https://www.farmingandwaterscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/KTR13Sheepdipping.pdf).

# Actions to take before dipping

## 4.1. Planning your treatment and ecto-parasite control programme

* Consider if dipping is the most appropriate treatment option. The use of pour-ons or injectable products may be more cost effective in some circumstances.
* Consider factors such as, number of sheep involved, reasons for treatment.

## 4.2. Certificate of competence

* To be able to buy sheep dip you must have a ‘Certificate of Competence in the Safe Use of Sheep Dip’. Contact Scottish Skills Testing Service (SSTS) or NPTC for information on obtaining a Certificate of Competence.
* Those dipping sheep must hold or be under the supervision of a certificate holder.

## 4.3. Buying and storing dip

* Only use dips authorised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate and only buy as much as you need to avoid having to store dip for long periods of time.
* Ensure the containers are in good condition, sealed and securely stored preferably in a medicines / pesticide store away from water and where any leaks or spills will be contained. The HSE provides advice on chemical storage.

## 4.4. Plan for the disposal of the waste sheep dip

* Don’t discharge any waste sheep dip to surface waters or drains.
* Ensure you have an appropriate permit under The Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations if you want to dispose of the waste sheep dip to land.
* Where you are using a waste disposal company, make arrangements in advance to have the waste dip collected by someone authorised to collect other people’s waste.
* If you are using a sheep dip contractor, you should establish in advance who is responsible for disposal of the waste dip. Where waste dip is being moved off-farm make sure the contractor is authorised to collect other people's waste. You should record movements of waste dip off the farm on a Waste Transfer Note.

## 4.5. Site Selection

* Ensure any mobile dippers, or part of any sheep dipping facility installed after 1 April 2008, or any handling facility used for pour-on treatments constructed after 1 January 2018 is sited at least 50m away from any ditch, burn, river, loch, wetland, coastal water, well, spring or borehole. Ensure all splashes or drips can be contained.
* Consider the movements the treated sheep will take after dipping. Sheep must be prevented from having access to any surface water or wetland while there is a risk of transfer of sheep dip or any pour-on treatment from their fleece to such places. Check the location of any drains etc and consider where any subsequent run-off from the area the sheep are held or will travel over may go during or after dipping,
* Where possible provide a holding area / grass paddock for treated sheep where they can be retained for at least 24 hours after treatment. Holding areas and return routes to grazing should be chosen to avoid areas close to surface waters or wells and springs. You should avoid hard surfaces with drainage to surface waters unless steps can be taken to protect drains.
* Where sheep will be transported from the dipping location make sure they have had adequate time to drip after dipping before being loaded in the trailer. Ensure the trailer is well bedded or otherwise managed to ensure there is no run-off or leakage of dip from the trailer during transit.
* Don’t traffic dipped sheep through ditches, streams, burns or fords.

## 4.6. Check dipping facilities

* Essure kerbs and splash guards are fitted and that all splashes, spills and run-off will be contained and flow back to the dip bath.
* Ensure the bath does not have any cracks or leaks and that any drain holes have been filled in. The sheep dipping facilities must not discharge underground and must not leak or overspill.
* Ensure the drip pen floor is impermeable and slopes back to the dipper.
* Ensure the drip pen is sufficiently sized to hold the dipped sheep for at least 10 minutes.
* Provide two drip pens if possible, together with a holding area / grass paddock away from water where sheep can be held for at least 24 hours after dipping.
* Ensure there is sufficient access to empty the bath after dipping.

## 4.7. Filling the dipper

* When filling ensure that dip cannot back-siphon by fitting a double check valve to the fill hose or positioning the hose so that it can’t be submerged in the bath.

# During dipping

## Check Forecast

* Avoid dipping if rain is forecast within 24 hours of dipping. Rain can wash dip off sheep.

## Mixing dip

* Fill the bath with water first before adding dip concentrate.
* Only measure and mix within the dipping facility so any spills or drips are contained, likewise wash out jugs etc in the drip pen so washings are collected.
* Take care with on-site storage of dip to avoid containers getting knocked over or damaged. Rinse out empty containers 3 times with clean water into the dipper.

## Containment

* Ensure all run-off is contained and flows back to the dip bath.
* Allow dipped sheep adequate time in the drip pen (min 10 minutes), use double drip pens if possible.
* Take extra care with mobile dippers within the farm steading to ensure run-off does not escape to drains or watercourses. Temporarily seal any drains where dip could enter.
* Where a silt trap is in place between the drip pen and the dip bath ensure it is checked regularly and kept clear.

# After dipping

## 6.1 Sheep movement

* Provide a holding area away from surface waters, wells and springs etc for as long as possible after dipping. This could be a grass paddock with no access to surface waters and springs / wells or a bedded court. The longer they can be kept in the holding area the better but aim for at least 24 hours.
* Provide a drinking trough to reduce the need for treated sheep to go to surface waters to drink.
* Where sheep will be transported from the dipping location make sure they have had adequate time to drip after dipping before being loaded in the trailer. Ensure the trailer is well bedded or otherwise managed to ensure there is no run-off or leakage of dip from the trailer during transit

## 6.2 Empty the dip bath

* Wash down the drip pens and any equipment, clothing etc into the bath and empty the bath within 24 hours.
* Cover the bath to avoid collecting rainwater and reduce the risk of animals or people falling into the dipper.
* Where waste dip can’t be disposed of straight away, store it in a secure and leak proof container well away from surface waters, wells and springs.
* If rainwater cannot be prevented from collecting in the dip bath, manage the dipping facilities to ensure there is no overspill. Even small amounts of dip left over after the bath is emptied can have a significant impact if washed to a surface or groundwater.

## 6.3 Waste dip disposal

* Waste dip can be disposed of to land in line with a permit issued by SEPA under The Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations or via someone authorised to collect other people's waste.
* Where a sheep dip contractor is taking responsibility for disposal of the waste dip or where you are passing the dip to a waste contractor for disposal ensure they are authorised to collect other people's waste and record the movement of dip off the farm using a waste transfer note (once the dip has been diluted down to working strength for use it is not considered special waste), The waste must be securely stored such that it can’t leak and it must be disposed of to an appropriately authorised site or transferred to an authorised person.

## 6.4 Container disposal

* Take rinsed out (3 times with clean water into the bath) empty containers to a registered waste disposal site or dispose of via a registered waste contractor.

6.5 Keep records

* Maintain your medicine book and where waste dip is disposed of to land, update your licence disposal records.

## 6.6 Emergencies

* If there is a risk that surface waters or groundwater could be polluted call 0800 80 70 60 immediately.
* If a spill occurs try to contain the spillage, never try to wash it away unless the run-off can be collected within the dip bath.
* Spills of concentrate can be soaked up using sand, sawdust or other absorbent materials.

# Glossary

**Groundwater** means all water which lies below the surface of the ground in direct contact with the soil or subsoil.

# Disclaimer

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