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**WAT-G-050**

**EASR Guidance**: **Registration Activity: Discharge of hot tub or swimming pool effluent where the volume is less than or equal to 10m3/day**

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# Purpose

This document provides information and guidance for anyone discharging effluent from a swimming pool or a hot tub which requires a registration under The Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations (EASR).

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

# What activity does this guidance apply to?

This guidance applies to the discharge of less than or equal to 10 cubic metres (m3) per day, cumulatively, of any of the following or a combination of any of the following:

1. swimming pool effluent to the water environment;
2. hot tub effluent, from a site with more than one hot tub, to [groundwater](#_Definitions);
3. hot tub effluent from a site to surface water.

# Understanding the activity

Swimming pool or hot tub effluent is wastewater from a swimming pool or a hot tub. A hot tubincludes spas and tubs with whirlpool devices.

Effluents from swimming pools are either generated from intermittent backwash water from cleaning of filters which may happen every few weeks, or from draining the swimming pool, which happens much less often, generally less than once a year.

Hot tubs located on self-catering properties such as chalets or holiday cottages are often emptied on a weekly basis following the departure of the guests. Domestic hot tubs will generally be emptied less often.

This activity covers the discharge of less than or equal to 10 cubic metres (m3) (10,000 litres) per day. This is the total cumulative volume of effluent from swimming pools or hot tubs, discharging at one site. You can discharge both hot tub effluent and swimming pool effluent at the same site. A site includes a camping or caravan site or a collection of chalets, cottages or pods.

If the volume of effluent discharged is more than 10 cubic metres (m3) per day, an application for an EASR permit is required.

However, if you have a site with only one hot tub and you are discharging to land or soakaway, the discharge of hot tub effluent can be authorised by EASR water General Binding Rule (GBR) 35, as long as the GBR 35 rules are complied with. GBR 35 applies only to hot tub effluent and only for discharges from a single hot tub either onto land or into a [soakaway](#_Glossary). If you are discharging hot tub effluent to surface water, then you need to apply for a registration.

# Understanding and minimising risks to the water environment

## Risks to the water environment

Swimming pool and hot tub effluent is normally hot and contains disinfectants, such as chlorine or bromine, and cleaning agents.

Disinfectants such as chlorine or bromine are very toxic to aquatic life. Warm effluents can increase water temperatures in watercourses which can result in lower oxygen levels and harm fish life.

Where possible, you must discharge swimming pool or hot tub effluent to the public sewer. You should contact Scottish Water regarding connections to the public sewer.

If you cannot discharge to the public sewer, you should discharge effluent onto land or into a [soakaway](#_Definitions). Discharge to surface water should be avoided. If you discharge to surface water such as a watercourse via a partial soakaway, you must dechlorinate or debrominate, as required, prior to discharge. This is because of the risks to aquatic life from the effluent.

SEPA discourages the use of polyhexamethylene biguanide (PHMB), often just called biguanide, because this is toxic to aquatic life and cannot easily be removed prior to discharge.

For sites where there are a number of hot tub discharges, it is recommended that the discharges are not to a single point, as this poses a greater risk to soil and groundwater.

To minimise risks to the water environment and to help you comply with the standard conditions for this activity, you should follow the Do’s and Don’ts below.

## Do’s and Don’ts

### Location

* Do discharge to the public sewer if available. If this is not feasible, do discharge effluent onto land or to a soakaway if possible.
* Don’t discharge effluent into a septic tank, a sewage treatment plant or any associated soakaway.
* Do locate the area where effluent is discharged to land or soakaway more than 10m away from any surface water.
* Don’t locate any soakaway within 50m of a water supply used for human consumption.
* Do ensure that for any discharge to soakaway, the water table is at least 1m below the base of the soakaway. If this is not possible, then as a minimum ensure that the water table is below the bottom of the soakaway to avoid a direct discharge to groundwater.
* Don’t discharge effluent directly into a river, burn, ditch or loch, unless this is unavoidable.
* Do discharge via a [partial soakaway](#_Definitions) of the correct size with a high level overflow before discharging to surface water.

### Discharge

* Do minimise use of chemicals to disinfect, clarify and sanitise the water.
* Do de-chlorinate or de-brominate effluent prior to discharge if there is chlorine or bromine in the effluent. This can be done by leaving the effluent to stand in a vented storage pool or separate holding tank for at least 5 days or until no chlorine or bromine is detectable. If this is not possible, chemicals can be added to de-chlorinate or de-brominate the effluent.
* Do test the effluent prior to disposal to ensure there is no chlorine or bromine in the effluent.
* Do allow effluent to cool to less than 20oC before discharging to surface water.
* Do ensure that the pH of the effluent is between 6 to 9.

# Glossary

A full list of terms is available in the main Glossary.

**Groundwater** means water which is below the surface of the ground in the saturation zone and in direct contact with the ground or subsoil.

**Partial soakaway** means a soakaway with an overflow to surface water.

**Soakaway** means a type of infiltration system for the treatment and dispersion of effluent into the ground.

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