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**WAT-G-006**

**EASR Guidance: Registration Activity: Borehole construction work less than or equal to 200m depth**

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# Purpose

This document provides information and guidance for anyone undertaking the construction and operation of any borehole with a depth of less than or equal to 200m which requires a registration 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 the construction, extension and/or operation, including the decommissioning, of any borehole with a depth of less than or equal to 200m, where the activity is not authorised by Water General Binding Rule 3 of EASR.

# Understanding the activity

This activity mainly applies to boreholes constructed for the intention of abstraction.

The construction of a borehole includes:

* The drilling of the borehole.
* The installation of pipe, called casing, and grout around it to seal the gap.
* The installation of a cap on top of the borehole.

The extension of a borehole means any work to increase the depth or diameter of the borehole.

The operation of a borehole covers the period after the borehole has been constructed until it is fully decommissioned. The borehole does not need to be in use.

The operation includes the decommissioning process. Decommissioning of a borehole means backfilling and/or sealing the borehole.

This activity covers boreholes that are less than or equal to 200m in depth. The depth is measured from the ground surface.

No authorisation is required for the discharge of uncontaminated groundwater that arises during the construction.

# Understanding and minimising risks to the water environment

## Risks to the water environment

Borehole construction can pose risks to the water environment from:

* The use of inappropriate drilling fluids which may escape into the ground and pollute the groundwater.
* Not appropriately managing drilling fluids at surface and allowing them to enter a watercourse.
* Not installing appropriate casing or not appropriately grouting it in place. This can cause poor quality groundwater to contaminate good quality groundwater or allow surface pollutants to enter groundwater.
* Not installing an appropriate cap. This can result in contaminants entering the borehole and polluting the groundwater. It can also waste groundwater by allowing groundwater under pressure to escape. This can reduce groundwater levels. This means there is less water available for other users and there is a reduced flow of groundwater to maintain flow in our rivers and burns in dry weather.
* Locating the borehole close to another borehole used for human consumption. This can disrupt the groundwater levels in that water supply and there is a risk of contamination of the water supply from the use of drilling fluids.
* Not properly decommissioning the borehole so that pollutants can enter groundwater or groundwater under pressure can escape from the borehole.

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

## Dos and don’ts

## Location

* Do check with your neighbour as to whether they have any borehole used for human consumption within 50m.
* Don’t locate the borehole within 50m of another borehole used for a water supply.

## Drilling

* Do use clean water or air as a drilling fluid if possible.
* ​Do ensure drilling muds are collected following use and not allowed to run-off.
* Don’t use drilling equipment that is contaminated.
* Do ensure you dispose of any water that arises during the construction or extension of a borehole appropriately to avoid pollution.

**​**

**​**Casing and grouting

* Do install solid casing from the ground surface to at least 2 metres into bedrock.
* Do allow a gap between the casing and edge of the drilled hole to allow effective grouting.
* Do grout the casing in place from the base of the permanent casing up to the surface.
* Do allow the grout to fully set for at least 24 hours before drilling recommences.

**​**Borehole top and cap

* Do have the top of the borehole above ground if possible.
* Do install a tight-fitting cap

​Decommissioning

* Do remove equipment such as the pump and pipework before sealing the borehole.
* Do remove damaged casing or grout.
* Do use uncontaminated materials to backfill the borehole.
* Do fill the top two metres with cement, concrete or bentonite grout.
* Do install a concrete cap.

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