



Hazardous Waste and Compressed Air Condensate



New regulation for old!

The Special Waste Regulations (1996) were withdrawn following the introduction of the Hazardous Waste Regulations in July 2005.

The Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2005

This affects all owners of compressed air systems with respect to disposal of untreated condensate and associated materials (e.g., used filters, bulk oil, rags or mats used to contain spillage, etc) since this is usually contaminated with oil.

Water Resources Act 1991

The UK Water Resources Act states that it is an offence to knowingly permit entry of toxic waste to surface or ground water. It is an offence with a fine of £20,000 or more in a crown court.

Water Industry Act 1991

The UK Water Industry Act states that discharge of trade effluent (such as treated condensate water) to a foul sewer can only occur with the agreed consent of the sewerage service provider.

- *If you intend to discharge your treated condensate water to your foul (waste water) sewer, you must first apply for a "Trade Effluent Consent" from your local water / effluent service provider.*
- *You must not discharge to foul sewer without such a consent in place and your supplier may require chemical analysis data and records of volumes discharged to the foul sewer.*
- *Under no circumstances can treated condensate water be discharged to open water (lakes, rivers, streams, etc), ground water or storm/rain water drains.*
- *Penalties for breach of the Water Resources Act can result in fines of up to £20,000 and even imprisonment for company directors.*

Here are some frequently asked questions regarding condensate from compressed air systems. See also BCAS Fact Sheet 301 for other compressed air equipment items which come under the regulations.

Q: I've installed an oil-water separator; does this mean I can put the treated condensate water down the foul sewer?

Yes, but only after a consent has been granted by the local water authority and if the total volume discharged and oil content is within the local water authority's agreed limit for oil. This limit varies with regional authorities, so check first that you comply. In **all** cases you will need a 'consent to discharge' or 'trade effluent consent' from your local water authority. You may need to provide evidence that the discharge is within agreed limits.

Q: How should I dispose of the bulk oil content resulting from an oil-water separator?

Oil-water separators will only separate (not remove) oil from condensate. The bulk oil must be taken away by a company who has either registered as a Hazardous Waste Producer or is a Licensed Waste Carrier.

Q: How do I check that my supplier complies?

Ensure the company who performs this service for you has the correct procedures in place and will ensure legal disposal of your waste oil.

- Ask to see the hazardous waste carrier / hazardous waste registration document
- Ask to see an audit trail of your waste oil for proof that it has been disposed of properly
- **For access to the public register for environmental information visit:**
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/access-the-public-register-for-environmental-information>
- <https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers>

Other useful links and information

See the Environment Agency's website for more information, including storage of oil.

NOTE: Regulations differ in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland – Full details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/dispose-hazardous-waste>

- <https://www.gov.uk/managing-your-waste-an-overview>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency>

Additional information on condensate management is available from – BCAS BPG 104 The Filtration & Drying of Compressed Air <https://www.bcas.org.uk/websiteform/bpg-104-the-filtration-and-drying-of-compressed-air-guide-9.aspx>