

TMA CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Fact Sheet no. 10

Environment Agency - Registration of a domestic sewage system

Many homes are not connected to a public sewer because they are located in the countryside or in other places that are too far away from sewers. They use small, **private sewage treatment systems, septic tanks** or, in exceptional circumstances **cesspools** to deal with their domestic sewage. If correctly located, designed and installed, these systems protect the environment from sewage pollution, but they must be properly maintained.

What do I need to do?

If you cannot connect to a public foul sewer, the Environment Agency (EA) provides guidance on other sewage treatment and disposal options.

See: www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/118753.aspx "Treatment and disposal of sewage where no foul sewer is available"

Discharges from septic tanks and small sewage treatment plants are mainly exempt from the need to have an environmental permit, **but they all need to be registered** with EA. **Discharges to rivers and streams need to be registered now and discharges which go into the ground must be registered by 31 December 2011.**

However, if you leave the registration until this date, you may have a significant delay of up to four months if your discharge is in a sensitive area. This will mean that you do not meet the registration criteria and will require an environmental permit urgently.

You can register free of charge, using the EA online system, if:

- the tank or small sewage treatment plant is **not** near to a protected or designated area for the natural environment;
- it is used to treat sewage from **11 people** (2 cubic metres) per day **or less** and the discharge goes into the ground; or
- it is used to treat sewage from **27 people** (5 cubic metres) per day **or less** and the discharge goes into a river or stream.

If you need more information on calculating sewage volumes, please read the British Water publication 'Flows and Loads - 3' which is available on the British Water website.

If EA cannot accept the registration for any reason they will write to suggest that you apply for a permit. **There is a one-off charge for a permit application to cover a risk assessment of the discharge.**

For further information contact TMA Chartered Surveyors on 01245 707570