



Odour risk assessment - new development proposals

Introduction

Odour emissions from existing sewage treatment works and pumping stations occur throughout the year with seasonal influence from weather conditions. We use development restraint zones around sewage works in consultation with local planning authorities (LPA).

Where new proposals fall within development restraint zones, planning policy generally requires that applications should be supported with an odour assessment to review the impact on new residents or the workplace environment. We will object to proposals where a proper assessment has not been prepared or indicates the risk of complaint or nuisance.

We adhere to the following national guidance:

- Code of practice on odour nuisance from sewage treatment works, DEFRA (2006)
- Guidance on the assessment of odour for planning, IAQM (2018)
- H4 Odour Management, Environment Agency (2011) applies to sites under IPPC permit conditions.

Odour management

All sites are operated with odour management plans to minimise emissions from operating activities. High risk sites use specific odour management plans while most sites use generic plans to control emissions. Site status and plans are reviewed annually and updated when appropriate.

Fly management

Wessex Water has designated fly sensitive sewage treatment works. We will enforce a minimum 250m development exclusion zone from these sites. We will advise if your development is proposed to one of these fly sensitive sites.

Assessment procedure

We will carry out a preliminary risk assessment to review the existing status and complaint data. This review will include a calculation of the odour radius to indicate the likelihood of complaint. Recommendations for further assessment will be made at this stage and will advise upon further modelling work or possible mitigation.

Where recommended the developer will need to instruct and prepare an odour assessment with dispersion modelling, including survey and sampling access at the works.

Detailed assessments

The preliminary risk assessment may confirm the need for further survey and modelling work including:

- library based odour modelling
- olfactory sampling based odour modelling
- sniff tests - FIDOL assessment
- hydrogen sulphide (H₂S) monitoring.

The developer will need to agree access in advance for survey and sampling methods with our odour scientist and site manager. Sampling must be carried out with one of our representatives in attendance, normally between April and September. The scope and methodology should be agreed in advance with us. We will provide detailed requirements on request.

There are no prescribed standards stated in published guidance, but atmospheric dispersion modelling should indicate typical levels for odour exposures not exceeding 98th percentile hourly mean concentration with odour contours for the 5.0, 3.0 & 1.5 OUEm⁻³.

Liaison with the local environmental health officer at the local authority is recommended as part of the assessment.

Further Information

Planning liaison team

Email: planning.liaison@wessexwater.co.uk

Call: 01225 526288

Activity flow chart

