

Water and Sewerage Company actions following a spill frequency trigger permit condition exceedance

Guidance note

Reference number: GN005

Document Owner: Head of Business – Regulation and Permitting

What is this document about?

It explains the steps Water and Sewerage Companies need to take when submitting documents to NRW following an exceedance of a spill frequency trigger (SFT) as required by the permit conditions.

Who is this document for?

Water and Sewerage Companies (WaSC) in Wales who have permits with Bathing Water SFT and/or Shellfish Water SFT permit conditions.

Contact for queries and feedback

Please contact the Water Quality and Biodiversity Regulatory Approaches team using WLBMR@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

Version History

Document Version	Date Published	Summary of Changes
1.0	Jul-23	Document published
2.0	Jun-24	Changed document review date, updated the contents page, Section 1- changed document name, Section 2 and 3 emphasised the important notes, revised the email subject naming convention in Annex 1 on page 7, revised the document name guidance and email subject guidance on page 7, removed the type of SFT notification.

Review Date: 01/11/2025

To report issues or problems with this guidance [contact Guidance Development](#)

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1. Overview of the SFT exceedance process

Table 1: Summary table of the six SFT stages, with the typical permit condition and the document the WaSC need to produce

SFT stage	Typical permit condition	Permit condition text	Document name
1	3.1.2 a	“Notify NRW of the trigger exceedance as soon as reasonably practicable (and no later than 4 weeks from the date of the trigger exceedance) in a format agreed by NRW”	Stage 1 Trigger Exceedance Notification (TEN)
2	3.1.2 b	“Provide a reason for the Trigger Exceedance and a description of any remedial action undertaken or proposed. Where the reason/s for the Trigger Exceedance cannot be identified within the 3 months of the Trigger Exceedance the operator must provide a proposal with timeframes for a full investigation to be carried out to identify the reason/s for the Trigger Exceedance for approval by Natural Resources Wales”	Stage 2 Close Out Report or Stage 2 Full Investigation Proposal (FIP)
3	3.1.2 c	“If a full investigation is required by condition 3.1.2(b), implement the proposal as approved by Natural Resources Wales and provide to Natural Resources Wales a report which identifies the reason/s for the Trigger Exceedance”	Stage 3 Trigger Exceedance Reason Report (TERR)
4	3.1.2 d	“Submit a plan with timeframes to resolve the reason/s for the Trigger Exceedance identified in 3.1.2(c) for approval by Natural Resources Wales”	Stage 4 Spill Reduction Plan (SRP)
5	3.1.2 e	“the operator shall implement the plan as approved in condition 3.1.2(d)”	N/A
6	None	None	Stage 6 Close Out Report

Check the permit conditions carefully – the wording and numbering may vary.

2. How do I send SFT information to NRW?

All information and documents related to SFT permit conditions must be emailed to NRW's SFT mailbox: SFT@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

Important – documents must be submitted using:

- a separate email for each storm overflow
- the specific email subject for each stage, as specified in [Annex 1 – Naming convention for email subject with examples](#).

You will receive an automated reply to confirm receipt.

3. What happens in each stage?

What happens in each stage is explained in more detail below. NRW will produce a Compliance Assessment Report (CAR) for each stage in response to receiving documentation from the WaSC, which will be sent to the WaSC's CARS mailbox.

Stage 1 – Trigger Exceedance Notification

If the SFT is exceeded the WaSC must notify NRW using the Trigger Exceedance Notification (TEN) template provided in [Annex 2](#). The template should be attached to an email and sent to NRW.

If the SFT is exceeded in successive years, the WaSC must still notify NRW using the agreed process each year.

Important

The permit condition requires the WaSC to notify NRW within four weeks of the trigger being exceeded, not four weeks from when the WaSC becomes aware of the exceedance.

Stage 2 – Remedial action or Full Investigation Proposal

This stage requires the WaSC to carry out an investigation to identify the cause of the exceedance. The WaSC should then carry out work to reduce the number of spills.

There are three possible outcomes for Stage 2:

1. Cause identified and work completed within 3 months
2. Cause identified within 3 months but remedial work cannot be completed within 3 months
3. Cause not identified within 3 months

Cause identified and work completed within 3 months

The WaSC should submit a Stage 2 Close Out report to NRW if the cause of the exceedance and the remedial work can be completed within 3 months from the date of the trigger exceedance. This report must contain suitable supporting information to demonstrate that the cause of the SFT exceedance has been resolved. Suitable information should consist of narrative supported by photographs, engineering reports, CCTV footage and plans/maps or any other relevant information.

Cause identified within 3 months but remedial work cannot be completed within 3 months

If the cause can be identified within three months, but the remedial works cannot be completed within the three months, the WaSC must submit a Spill Reduction Plan (see stage four) that identifies how the number of spills will be reduced.

The permit condition requires NRW to approve the Spill Reduction Plan; this will be done via a CAR.

Cause not identified within 3 months

If the cause of the exceedance cannot be identified within three months, the WaSC must supply a Full Investigation Proposal (FIP) to identify the reason.

The FIP must detail the proposal with appropriate deadlines. The permit condition requires NRW to approve the proposal; this will be done via a CAR.

Important

The permit condition requires the WaSC to submit the outcome of their investigations within three months of the trigger exceedance, not three months from when they become aware of the exceedance.

Stage 3 – Trigger Exceedance Reason Report

The WaSC should carry out the work described in the approved Full Investigation Proposal (FIP). Once the investigation has been completed the WaSC should send NRW a Trigger Exceedance Reason Report (TERR) which identifies the reason(s) for the exceedance.

Stage 4 – Spill Reduction Plan

Once the reasons for the exceedance are identified in Stage 3, the WaSC should then produce a Spill Reduction Plan (SRP) that identifies how the number of spills will be reduced. The plan must contain reasonable deadlines and be sent to NRW for approval.

The permit condition requires NRW to approve the plan; this will be done via a CAR.

Stage 5 – Implement solutions

The WaSC should complete the actions outlined in the SRP. There is no permit requirement to send NRW any documents during this stage. We expect the WaSC to stay in communication with NRW's lead officer during this stage. This will enable discussion to take place such as progress on completing the actions to the approved deadlines agreed in the SRP (stage 4).

Stage 6 – Close out report

Once all the work to reduce the number of spills from the storm overflow has been completed the WaSC should send NRW a close out report.

The report should contain all the necessary information to demonstrate, with appropriate evidence, that the work carried out will reduce the number of spills to below the trigger. Information should consist of narrative supported by photographs, engineering reports, CCTV footage and plans/maps or any other relevant information.

Annex 1 – Naming convention for email subject with examples

Email subject naming convention:

[Stage #] [BW or SFW] [Document name] – [Permit reference] – [NRW Environment Team]

Permit reference:

As specified on the permit, excluding any prefixes (EPR or NPS)

NRW Environment Team:

You should use the NRW Environment Team as listed below:

- Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly & Newport
- Cardiff & Vale
- Carmarthenshire
- Ceredigion
- Conwy
- Cwm Taf & Bridgend
- Denbighshire
- Dwyfor ac Meirionydd
- Mon ac Arfon
- Monmouthshire & Torfaen
- Neath Port Talbot
- North Powys
- Pembrokeshire
- South Powys
- Swansea
- Wrexham & Flintshire

Example email subjects for each stage

Stage	Document name	Example email subject
1	Stage 1 Trigger Exceedance Notification (TEN)	Stage 1 BW Trigger Exceedance Notification – TB3593HM – Swansea
2	Stage 2 Close Out Report or Stage 2 Full Investigation Proposal (FIP)	Stage 2 SFW Close Out Report – CG0113902 – Mon ac Arfon or Stage 2 SFW Full Investigation Proposal – CG0113902 – Mon ac Arfon
3	Stage 3 Trigger Exceedance Reason Report (TERR)	Stage 3 BW Trigger Exceedance Reason Report – TB3593HM – Swansea
4	Stage 4 Spill Reduction Plan (SRP)	Stage 4 Spill Reduction Plan – CG0113902 – Mon ac Arfon

Stage	Document name	Example email subject
5	N/A	N/A
6	Stage 6 Close Out Report	Stage 6 BW Close Out Report – TB3593HM – Swansea

Annex 2 – Trigger Exceedance Notification (TEN) template

Use tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Spill Frequency Trigger Exceedance Notification (TEN)

Details	Information to include
Date of exceedance:	Date (DD/MM/YY) spill limit specified in the permit was exceeded
Water company name:	Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water
Asset name:	Use name on permit to match public register
Permit reference:	Use permit reference on permit to match public register (no prefixes such as EPR or NPS)
Permit spill frequency:	Spill limit specified by permit (typically found in table S3.1)
Number of spills at issue of TEN:	Number of spills which have occurred at date of TEN notification (notification date will be taken from email)
Duration of spills (hrs):	Total duration of all spills, using start and stop times
Name of Impacted Bathing or Shellfish Water (delete as appropriate):	Include the name(s) of any impacted Bathing Waters and/or Shellfish Waters
NRW Environment Team:	Name of the NRW Environment Team the overflow is located in
For further information contact:	Job title and team contact details

Table 3: TEN history

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
TEN? (Yes/No)								