

Indicative Limits for Common Substances in Trade Effluent Discharges to Public Sewer

Last Updated in August 2025

Indicative standards to which trade effluent discharges should normally comply with prior to discharge to the public foul sewer in the Wessex Water region are given below.

These limits may be varied depending on local circumstances taking into account the volume and rate of discharge and the size and flow of the receiving sewer network and treatment works. Additional requirements may be necessary to control the discharge of toxic and other hazardous substances.

A combination of fixed upper limits and maximum daily load limits are normally applied.

Prohibited substances

- Petroleum spirit
- Calcium carbide
- Carbon disulphide
- Asbestos and asbestos-like fibres
- Sludges arising from the pre-treatment of trade effluent before discharge to sewer
- Biocides, including pesticides, herbicides and fungicides
- Persistent synthetic substances that may sink, float or remain in suspension and which may interfere with the flow, treatment or recycling of sewage or sewage products

Screening requirement

Effluent shall not contain materials which may be retained by a screen having perforations of 6mm in diameter.

Acidity, alkalinity and temperature

The pH value should be between 6 and 10

The temperature shall not exceed 43.3°C (110°F)

General substances

Indicative concentration in milligrams per litre (mg/l)

Suspended solids	500
Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD)	1,000
Fats, Oils & Greases	200
Sulphide	1
Sulphate	1,000
Free Cyanide	2
Ammoniacal Nitrogen	30
Total Phosphorus	10
Chlorine	20
Chloride	1,000
Total Detergents (anionic, cationic and non-ionic)	100
Dissolved Methane	0.14

Total metals

Indicative concentration in milligrams per litre (mg/l)

Aluminium (as Al)	10
Arsenic (as As)	1
Chromium (as Cr)	3
Copper (as Cu)	3
Iron (as Fe)	10
Lead (as Pb)	3
Nickel (as Ni)	2
Molybdenum (as Mo)	2
Silver (as Ag)	2
Tin (as Sn)	2
Zinc (as Zn)	5

Organic Compounds

Indicative concentration in micrograms per litre (µg/l)

Benzene	10
Chloroform	3
Ethylbenzene	15
Tetra-chloro-ethene	10
Toluene	10
Total PAH	15
Total Phenol	250
Tri-chloro-ethene	30
Xylene	50

Substances Limited to Background Concentration

The following Prescribed substances are listed in Schedule 1 to The Trade Effluents (Prescribed Processes and Substances) Regulations 1989, 1990 and 1992, as amended from time to time, shall be eliminated from the effluent insofar as they are in concentration greater than the background concentration (as defined in the said Regulations):

Substance		
1, 2 Dichloroethane	Dieldrin	Mercury and its compounds
Aldrin	Endosulfan	Pentachlorophenol
Atrazine	Endrin	Polychlorinated Biphenyls
Azinphos-methyl	Fenitrothion	Simazine
Cadmium and its compounds	Gamma-Hexachlorocyclohexane	Tributyltin compounds
Carbon Tetrachloride	Hexachlorobenzene	Triphenyltin compounds
DDT	Hexachlorobutadiene	Trichlorobenzene
Dichlorvos	Malathion	Trifluralin