
STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

1997 No. 489

**EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
WATER AND SEWERAGE**

**The Surface Waters (Shellfish) (Classification)
Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997**

Made - - - - 12th November 1997

Coming into operation 5th January 1998

The Department of the Environment, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by section 4B of the Water Act (Northern Ireland) 1972⁽¹⁾ and now vested in it⁽²⁾, section 56B of the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1973⁽³⁾ and, being a department designated⁽⁴⁾ for the purposes of section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972⁽⁵⁾ in relation to measures relating to the prevention, reduction and elimination of pollution of water, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by that section and of every other power enabling it in that behalf, hereby makes the following Regulations:

Citation and commencement

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Surface Waters (Shellfish) (Classification) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997 and shall come into operation on 5th January 1998.

Interpretation

2.—(1) In these Regulations—

“the Department” means the Department of the Environment; and

“pollution control functions” means the Department’s functions under or by virtue of the following enactments, that is to say—

(a) the Water Act (Northern Ireland) 1972;

(b) the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1973;

(1) 1972 c. 5 (N.I.) as amended by the Water and Sewerage Services (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 (S.I. 1993/3165 (N.I. 16) Art. 16)

(2) S.R. & O. (N.I.) 1973 No. 504 Art. 4

(3) S.I. 1973/70 (N.I.2) as amended by the Water and Sewerage Services (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 (S.I. 1993/3165 (N.I. 16) Art. 12)

(4) S.I. 1989/2393

(5) 1972 c. 68

- (c) Regulations made by virtue of section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972, to the extent that the Regulations relate to pollution of water.
- (2) Expressions used in these Regulations which are also used in Directive [79/923/EEC](#)(6) (quality required of shellfish waters) shall have the same meaning as in that Directive.
- (3) The Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954(7) shall apply to these Regulations as it applies to a Measure of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Classification of waters

3. The classifications SFW and the criteria for that classification set out in Schedule 1 shall apply for classifying waters which are coastal or brackish waters which need protection or improvement in order to support shellfish (bivalve and gastropod molluscs) life and growth and thus contribute to the high quality of shellfish products directly edible by man.

Compliance with relevant requirements

4.—(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), any waters classified under these Regulations shall be treated in relation to any period of 12 months as complying with the requirements specified in Schedule 1 for any parameter if in that period in relation to those waters—

- (a) in the case of the parameter for organohalogenated substances or metals, 95 per cent of the samples taken for that parameter in accordance with regulation 7 comply with the requirements;
- (b) in the case of the parameter for salinity or dissolved oxygen, 100 per cent of the samples taken for that parameter in accordance with regulation 7 comply with the requirements;
- (c) in the case of any other parameter, 75 per cent of the samples taken for that parameter in accordance with regulation 7 comply with the requirements.

(2) Where in accordance to regulation 7(5) the frequency of sampling is reduced in relation any waters classified under these Regulations, 100 per cent of samples taken for each parameter in accordance with regulation 7 in relation to those waters must comply with the requirements specified in Schedule 1.

(3) Non-compliant samples shall be ignored for the purposes of paragraphs (1) and (2) if they are the result of a disaster.

Guideline values and no deterioration principle

5. In discharging its pollution control functions in relation to any waters classified under these Regulations, the Department shall—

- (a) endeavour to respect the guideline values and comments specified in Schedule 2; and
- (b) take into account the principle that implementation of measures taken pursuant to Directive [79/923/EEC](#) may on no account lead, either directly or indirectly, to increased pollution of coastal or brackish waters.

Compliance with standards

6.—(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), any waters classified under these Regulations shall be treated in relation to any period of 12 months as complying with any standard for any parameter adopted as a result of regulation 5 if in period in relation to those waters—

(6) O.J. No. L281, 10.11.1979, p. 47

(7) [1954 c. 33 \(N.I.\)](#)

- (a) in the case of the parameter for organohalogenated substances or metals, 100 per cent of the samples taken for that parameter in accordance with regulation 7 comply with the standard;
- (b) in the case of the parameter for salinity or dissolved oxygen, 95 per cent of the samples taken for that parameter in accordance with regulation 7 comply with that standard;
- (c) in the case of any other parameter, 75 per cent of the samples taken for that parameter in accordance with regulation 7 comply with the standard.

(2) Where in accordance with regulation 7 the frequency of sampling is reduced in relation to any waters classified under these Regulations, 100 per cent of samples taken for each parameter in accordance with regulation 7 in relation to those waters must comply if it is to be treated as meeting the standard adopted as a result of regulation 5.

(3) Non-compliant samples shall be ignored for the purposes of paragraphs (1) and (2) if they are the result of a disaster.

Sampling and analysis

7.—(1) The Department shall ensure that waters classified under these Regulations are sampled and samples are analysed in accordance with the following provisions of this Regulation.

(2) Samples in relation to any waters classified under these Regulations shall always be taken at the same sampling point.

(3) The Department shall fix the exact position of the sampling point, and the depth at which samples are to be taken, having regard in particular to —

- (a) the distance of the sampling point to the nearest point where pollutants are discharged; and
- (b) local environmental conditions.

(4) Subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), sampling for any parameter shall be carried out at least at the minimum frequency specified in the Schedules in relation to that parameter.

(5) Where the Department's records show that the quality of any waters classified under these Regulations is appreciably higher than the minimum required by these Regulations and the standards adopted as a result of regulation 5, the Department may reduce the sampling frequency for that parameter or, if there is no pollution and no risk of deterioration of their quality, it may dispense with sampling for that parameter altogether.

(6) Where sampling shows that the requirements of regulation 4, or the standards adopted as a result of regulation 5 are not being met, the Department shall establish whether this is the result of chance, a natural phenomenon or pollution and shall adopt appropriate measures.

(7) Samples for any parameter shall be analysed using the reference methods of analysis specified in the Schedules in relation to that parameter or methods which are at least as reliable as the reference methods.

Derogations

8. The Department may derogate from the requirements of these Regulations in the event of exceptional weather or geographical conditions.

Modification of section 4C of the Water Act (Northern Ireland) 1972

9. Section 4C of the Water Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 shall have effect—

- (a) as if it imposed a duty on the Department to exercise the powers conferred on it by that section to classify under these Regulations such waters as are appropriate to give effect to Directive [79/923/EEC](#); and

- (b) in relation to the performance of that duty, as if subsections (4), (5) and (7) of that section were omitted.

Programmes

10. The Department shall establish programmes in order to reduce pollution and to ensure that waters classified under these Regulations conform, within 6 years following classification, to the criteria contained in Schedule 1 and the values adopted as a result of regulation 5.

Transfrontier consultation

11.—(1) Where the Department considers classifying coastal and brackish waters in the immediate vicinity of the frontier with the Republic of Ireland, it shall consult with the competent authorities of that State in order to determine the stretches of such waters which should be classified for the purposes of these Regulations and the consequences to be drawn from the establishment of common quality objectives.

(2) The consequences referred to in paragraph (1) shall be determined by each State after formal consultations and the Commission may participate in any such consultations.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of the Environment on

L.S.

12th November 1997.

R. W. Rogers
Assistant Secretary

SCHEDULE 1

regulations 3, 4 and 7

Criteria for classification of waters as shellfish waters

No in Annex 1 to 79/923/EEC	Parameter	Units	Requirements to be satisfied	Reference methods of analysis	Minimum sampling and measuring frequency
1.	pH	pH unit	≥ 7 and ≤ 9	— electrometry Measured <i>in situ</i> at the time of sampling	Quarterly
3.	Coloration (after filtration)	mg Pt/l	A discharge affecting shellfish waters must not cause the colour of the waters after filtration to deviate by more than 10 mg Pt/l from the colour of waters not so affected.	— Filter through a 0.45 μ m membrane Photometric method, using the platinum/cobalt scale	Quarterly
4.	Suspended solids	mg/l	A discharge affecting shellfish waters must not cause the suspended solids content of the water to exceed by more than 30% the content of waters not so affected	Filtration through a 0.45 μ m membrane, drying at 105°C and weighing — Centrifuging (for at least 5 minutes, with mean acceleration 2,800 to 3,200g), drying at 105°C and weighing	Quarterly
5.	Salinity	‰	≤ 40 ‰ — A discharge affecting	Conductivity	Monthly

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No in Annex 1 to 79/923/EEC	Parameter	Units	Requirements to be satisfied	Reference methods of analysis	Minimum sampling and measuring frequency
			shellfish waters must not cause their salinity to exceed by more than 10% the salinity of waters not so affected		
6.	Dissolved oxygen	saturation %	<p>≥70% (average value) Should an individual measurement indicate a value lower than 70%, measurements shall be repeated</p> <p>An individual measurement may not indicate a value of less than 60% unless there are no harmful consequences for the development of shellfish colonies</p>	<p>— Winkler’s method</p> <p>— Electrochemical method</p>	<p>Monthly, with a minimum of 1 sample representative of low oxygen conditions on the day of sampling. However, where major daily variations are suspected, a minimum of 2 samples in 1 day shall be taken</p>
7.	Petroleum hydrocarbons		<p>Hydrocarbons must not be present in the shellfish water in such quantities as to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — produce a visible film on the surface of the 	Visual examination	Quarterly

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No in Annex 1 to 79/923/EEC	Parameter	Units	Requirements to be satisfied	Reference methods of analysis	Minimum sampling and measuring frequency
			water and/ or a deposit on the shellfish — have harmful effects on shellfish		
8.	Organohalogenated substances		The concentration of each substance in the shellfish waters or in shellfish flesh must not reach or exceed a level which has harmful effects on the shellfish and their larvae	Gas chromatography after extraction with suitable solvents and purification	Half-yearly
9.	Metals Silver Ag Arsenic As Cadmium Cd Chromium Cr Copper Cu Mercury Hg Nickel Ni Lead Pb Zinc Zn	mg/l	The concentration of each substance in the shellfish waters or in the shellfish flesh must not exceed a level which gives rise to harmful effects on the shellfish and their larvae The synergic effects of these metals must be taken into consideration	Spectrometry of atomic absorption preceded, where appropriate, by concentration and/or extraction	Half-yearly
11.	Substances affecting		Concentration should be	Examination of the shellfish	

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No in Annex 1 to 79/923/EEC	Parameter	Units	Requirements to be satisfied	Reference methods of analysis	Minimum sampling and measuring frequency
	the taste of shellfish		lower than that which is liable to impair the taste of the shellfish	by tasting where the presence of one of these substances is presumed	

SCHEDULE 2

regulations 5, 6 and 7

Guideline values in relation to the quality of shellfish waters

No in Annex 1 to 79/923/EEC	Parameter	Units	Guideline values and comments	Reference methods of analysis	Minimum sampling and measuring frequency
2.	Temperature	°C	A discharge affecting shellfish waters must not cause the temperature of the water to exceed by more than 2°C the temperature of waters not so affected	— Thermometry Measured <i>in situ</i> at the time of sampling	Quarterly
5.	Salinity	‰	12 to 38‰	Conductivity	Monthly
6.	Dissolved oxygen	saturation %	≥80%	— Winkler's method — Electrochemical method	Monthly, with a minimum of 1 sample representative of low oxygen conditions on the day of sampling. However, where major daily variations are suspected, a minimum of 2 samples in

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No in Annex 1 to 79/923/EEC	Parameter	Units	Guideline values and comments	Reference methods of analysis	Minimum sampling and measuring frequency
					1 day shall be taken
8.	Organohalogenated substances		The concentration of each substance in shellfish flesh must be so limited that it contributes, in accordance with Article 1 of Directive 79/923/EEC , to the high quality of shellfish products	Gas chromatography after extraction with suitable solvents and purification	Half-yearly
9.	Metals Silver Ag Arsenic As Cadmium Cd Chromium Cr Copper Cu Mercury Hg Nickel Ni Lead Pb Zinc Zn	mg/l	The concentration of each substance in shellfish flesh must be so limited that it contributes in accordance with Article 1 of Directive 79/923/EEC , to the high quality of shellfish products	Spectrometry of atomic absorption preceded, where appropriate, by concentration and/or extraction	Half-yearly
10.	Faecal coliforms		≤300 in the shellfish flesh and intervalvular liquid	Method of dilution with fermentation in liquid substrates in at least 3 tubes in 3 dilutions. Subculturing of the positive tubes on a confirmation	Quarterly

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No in Annex 1 to 79/923/EEC	Parameter	Units	Guideline values and comments	Reference methods of analysis	Minimum sampling and measuring frequency
				medium. Count according to MPN (most probable number). Incubation temperature 44° ± 0.5°C	

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations.)

These Regulations prescribe a system for classifying the quality of coastal and brackish waters which need protection or improvement in order to support shellfish life and growth.

The classification SFW prescribed by regulation 3 reflects the mandatory values assigned by Directive 79/923/EEC (“the Directive”) (on the quality required of shellfish waters) to the parameters listed in Schedule 1. Regulation 4 sets out the circumstances in which classified waters shall be treated as complying with requirements specified in Schedule 1.

Regulation 5 requires the Department, in discharging its pollution control functions, to endeavour to observe the values and comments set out in Schedule 2 while preventing any increase in pollution. Regulation 6 sets out the circumstances in which classified waters shall be treated as complying with any standard adopted by the Department under regulation 5.

Regulation 7 makes provision with respect to the reference methods of measurement, and the minimum frequency required for sampling and analysis, laid down in the Directive for those parameters.

Regulation 8 allows the Department to derogate from the requirements of the Regulations in the event of exceptional weather or geographic conditions.

Regulation 9 modifies the Water Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 so as to require the Department to classify appropriate waters in accordance with the Directive and to remove rights of appeal against such classifications.

Regulation 10 provides for pollution reduction programmes and regulation 11 provides for consultation with the Republic of Ireland if the Department considers classifying waters in the vicinity of the frontier.

These Regulations transpose in part the requirements of Directive 79/923/EEC. Copies of the Directive may be obtained from The Stationery Office Ltd, 16 Arthur Street, Belfast BT1 4GD.

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