



Discharges to Water Procedure

Brief Description & Purpose:	<p>This Procedure explains how discharges to water are managed at the University in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • address the risks and opportunities associated with aspect 'Discharges to Water'; • minimise discharges to water; • protect ecosystems, wildlife, and human health and welfare; • ensure compliance with the institution's effluent discharge consent and relevant environmental legislation. <p>The Policy is overseen by the University Sustainability Management Group. Progress is reported via the Sustainability Annual Report.</p>		
Applicable to (list cohorts):	Staff: All staff	Students: All students	Third Parties: Suppliers
Date Created:	16 June 2014	Last Review Date:	01 June 2026
Approval Authority:	University Sustainability Management Group	Approved:	15 June 2026
Executive Owner:	Prof John Woodward	Business Owner:	Dr Paul Steadman
Next Review Date:	15 June 2028	Publication External Y/N	Yes

1.0 Introduction

Our Discharges to Water Procedure describes our water quality standards for discharges. The procedure sets out the measures we take to ensure that we dispose of water responsibly and minimise risk of pollution or threat to animal or human health. The Procedure describes how we conform with the requirements of our Discharge Consents from Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency, which include the requirements for managing our higher risk discharges, such as labs or car parks. All relevant staff receive training on these procedures, and our Spill Response Procedure for emergency actions in the event of a spill, to protect ecosystems and wildlife.

2.0 Scope

This procedure covers all discharges to surface water and effluent drains across the University.

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3.0 Process

3.1 Drainage system

The University has identified all surface water and effluent drainage routes which are marked on the campus site drainage plans.

All drains at City Campus drain to foul sewer. Coach Lane campus includes surface water drains as well as foul drains. Surface water drains are indicated onsite by a blue dot/section on the drain.

The drainage system is maintained by CBRE who conduct minor works / repairs as and when required.

Prior to the commencement of major works on site, drainage surveys are conducted to determine the structural integrity of the drainage system. The survey reports are held by the relevant Project Team.

Campus Services are responsible for managing all issues relating to the drainage system. They, through outsourcing to CBRE, maintain external interceptors, including the interceptor at Coach Lane. Faculties are responsible for identifying areas within their buildings where interceptors are needed and for arranging the installation and maintenance of these e.g. interceptors on sinks.

3.2 Environmental Permits

3.2.1 Vehicle washing is strictly prohibited within the University's estate.

The University is not permitted to discharge any effluent except under the conditions of the Consents as issued below.

3.2.2 Discharges to surface water and groundwater

The University is not permitted to discharge to surface water except as specified by **Consent to Discharge (235/1665)** as issued by the Environment Agency for site drainage from the car park at Coach Lane Campus.

This Consent permits only site drainage from the car parking area at Coach Lane which has received treatment via means of an oil interceptor. The interceptor is maintained by Campus Services.

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3.2.3 Discharges - Trade effluent

Trade effluent is any liquid waste (effluent), other than surface water and domestic sewage that is discharged from premises being used for a business, trade or industrial process. Permission is required from the relevant water and sewerage company before any trade effluent is discharged to the public sewer.

The following should not be disposed of to drain:

- Hazardous Waste (potential discharge permitted for low concentration material below hazardous waste thresholds). Excessive dilution is not good practice and should not normally be used as a means of disposing of hazardous liquids.
- Fats, pulps, plaster, cement - matter likely to cause blockages or damage to the sewer system.
- Suspended solids must be considered before disposal to drain as limits are in place.
- Flammable liquids / solids.
- Any living GMO.

Any material on the 'Special Category Effluent' list and similar is strictly prohibited.

The above items should be disposed of in accordance with **EP 08A Waste Management Procedure**.

The University holds **Discharge Consent (N3109)** from Northumbrian Water to discharge effluent into the sewers servicing buildings including Ellison Building, Burt Hall, Squires Buildings and the CCE2 Design Building. It also holds **Discharge Consent (N3229)** for discharge arising from the swimming pool in Sport Central.

The Consents specify a number of conditions that must be met by any effluent discharged to drain. These include quantity, rate, temperature, pH value and specific prohibited matter (including living genetically modified organisms).

The Consents do not require any regular sampling of effluent however, for Discharge Consent (N3109), a daily record must be kept of the volumes of trade effluent discharged from any individual process where that volume is likely to exceed 5m³ per day.

Water used for cleaning should also be managed in compliance with this procedure and the University's Consents. Such water should be discharged to foul sewer. If the water has been used to clean up materials not permitted to drain, this water should not be discharged to drain e.g. high levels of fats, pulps, suspended solids, acids/alkalis or hazardous chemicals. These items should be cleaned up via an alternative means before cleaning with water e.g. Hoover up sawdust/ wood shavings, use a spill kit to clean up spilt chemicals, fuels or oils and dispose of as hazardous waste.

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Permissions has also been given by Northumbrian Water for the discharge of saline solution to foul drain at Coach Lane campus (100ml or 500ml bags of sodium chloride in water with a listed pH of 5.5). This discharge should be flushed with equal amounts of water. Details of the agreement are listed within the **EF 06 C External Communications Log**.

The Faculty of Engineering & Environment have a 'Siltbuster' which is used to treat water from cement preparation so that it is suitable for discharge to drain. This removes sediment and corrects the pH. It will not permit discharge of water until the correct pH is detected. The item is maintained by the Faculty. Calibration is undertaken weekly and probes are replaced on a 6-monthly basis, during periods in which the Siltbuster is active. Records are maintained by the team in accordance with **EF 16 Monitoring and Maintenance Schedule**.

Calibration of the auto-dosing for the swimming pool is undertaken by the team in Sport Central. Records are maintained by the team in accordance with **EF 16 Monitoring and Maintenance Schedule**.

3.2.4 Responding to a breach of permit

Where conditions of a Discharge Consent are breached, the environmental incident should be logged with the University's Sustainability Manager immediately and an **Incident Report Form** completed.

The Sustainability Manager will contact Northumbrian Water /the Environment Agency should a breach of the consent occur.

3.3 Emergency Response

Risk Assessments should be undertaken by the relevant persons before any activity which might pose a spill risk. Any spill kit requirements and/or training needs, identified in the Risk Assessment and Method Statements, should be met by the Risk Assessment owner before the activity takes place.

Spill kits are located at a number of locations across the University with spill training available to all staff. Spill kits accessible to Campus Services are listed on the **EP 15 A Campus Spill Kit Map**. Faculties manage spill kit provision locally – listing map locations on lab maps and inspecting spill kits as part of their lab walkarounds.

See **EP 15 Emergency Preparedness and Response Procedure** for further details regarding how to prevent, manage and report chemical or oil spillages.

4.0 Responsibilities

Campus Services	Manage the University's surface water and effluent drain system.
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	Ensure compliance with the Environment Agency’s Discharge Permit (235/1665). Maintain accurate drainage maps of the University estate.
CBRE	Maintain and conduct minor repairs to the institution’s surface water and effluent drain system and the management of external interceptors.
Faculties - Technicians	Ensure compliance with the trade effluent Discharge Consent (N3109) issued by Northumbrian Water. Maintain interceptors and siltbuster within labs/studios.
Sport Central Manager	Ensure compliance with Sport Central’s trade effluent discharge consent (N3229) issued by Northumbrian Water, including calibration of auto-dosing.
Sustainability Manager	Alert the relevant authority of any breach of a Consent to Discharge and coordinate the development of the report as required by the Authority.

5.0 Related Documents

- **EF 04 A Compliance Obligations Register** – access via the Sustainability Manager
- **EF 06 C External Communications Log**
- **EP 08A Waste Management Procedure**
- **EP 10A Consent to Discharge 235/1665 (Coach Lane)**
- **EP 10B Consent to Discharge N3109 (City Campus)**
- **EP 10 C Consent to Discharge N3229 (Sport Central)**
- **EP 15 Emergency Preparedness and Response Procedure**
- **EP 15 A Campus Spill Kit Map**
- **EF 16 Monitoring and Maintenance Schedule**
- **Drainage maps** – request from CAD Technician, Campus Services

6.0 Document Control

Version No.	Reviewer	Date	Changes
1.0		16.06.14	Created
1.1	Dr Paul Steadman	20.06.24	Emergency response update
1.2	Dr Paul Steadman	24.06.25	Policy format, strategy review
1.3	Dr Paul Steadman	01.06.26	Policy review

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