

THE CONSENT

If the results of the survey and, where necessary, the environmental appraisal are satisfactory, we will issue you a consent. This allows you to proceed with the works you propose, but you must comply with the conditions on it. There are two sets of conditions. One is a set of general conditions, which applies to all consents. The other will be specially tailored to your proposal. These special conditions will cover points like the dimensions of the borehole and any monitoring boreholes required, details of required test pumping, where to discharge water, etc.

The general conditions make it clear that you must keep us informed about the different stages in your work. We must know when you intend to start drilling, when source development (such as acidisation) will start, and when you intend to start test pumping.



Considering the application

Another condition reflects that we sometimes cannot forecast what the effects of your works are going to be. We therefore reserve the right to withdraw or alter the consent at any time. This might happen, for example, if other sources are being adversely affected by test pumping and there is no agreement with the owners of these sources about how to deal with the problem. Often it will be necessary to require further survey work, to help reach a decision that will be in everyone's best interests.

RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Your next step will be to apply for an abstraction licence unless you decide to go no further with your proposals. The results of your work, especially the test pumping, will be very important when we consider your application. We can assess your results more efficiently if they are prepared, analysed and presented in the way we recommend.

If you wish, we can discuss your proposals further before you submit your full application.

MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask. Contact the NRA office for your region. Each region has several area offices. Staff will either help you at the regional office or they will refer you to the appropriate area office and give you the name of the person to speak to.

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SEARCHING FOR
GROUNDWATER



NRA

National Rivers Authority

A NEW FRAMEWORK

One of the NRA's tasks as part of its abstraction licensing work is managing groundwater in England and Wales. From October 1993, we have revised policies and procedures for controlling drilling and test pumping of groundwater sources. These reflect:

the importance of good, scientifically-based, groundwater management;

the need to have a consistent approach throughout the regions that make up our national organisation;

the need for those who wish to develop groundwater sources to participate more in working out the effects.

This pamphlet briefly explains these new policies and procedures.

WHY ARE THERE CONTROLS?

Parliament has entrusted the NRA, through the Water Resources Act 1991, to manage water resources. This includes licensing abstractions. You do not need a full abstraction licence simply to investigate whether or not groundwater is present and worth abstracting. However, section 32 of the Act says you must still have our consent for such activities. These activities usually involve

drilling and test pumping boreholes, but may include excavation and test pumping of seepage lagoons or catchpits.



The procedures for obtaining the consent are simpler than for a full abstraction licence. However, we still have to take care in granting it and include conditions so that we can control any adverse effects of the drilling and test pumping activities.

The same procedures apply to us, when we investigate groundwater for our own purposes.

Sometimes drilling works will require other consents, for example planning permission from the local planning authority, NRA land drainage consent, or NRA discharge consent.

Fissure in a limestone core



PROBLEMS CAUSED BY DRILLING AND TEST PUMPING ACTIVITIES

Often, there is little impact, so we can grant consents without difficulty. The main concerns are:

- that there is enough water available in the area;
- that test pumping does not have an adverse effect on other water interests — wells, boreholes, streams, wetlands, etc.
- that you do not cause pollution, in nearby streams or in the groundwater;
- that drilling contractors work in a hygienic way;
- that you dispose of any wastes, including drilling cuttings, properly.

Geophysical logging



Pumping test measured with a weir tank

HOW THE CONSENT PROCEDURE WORKS

You apply for a consent on our form WR—32. We encourage people to discuss their proposals with us informally first. This is not a requirement, but is usually helpful for you.

We will carry out a preliminary appraisal and do our best to let you know whether it will be pointless or difficult to grant a consent. For example, even if drilling and test pumping is successful, the area may already be over-abstracted. We want to warn you if we think you are going to waste money by pursuing the application.

There may be no obvious reason why you should not do your drilling and test pumping. However, before we issue a consent, you must carry out a survey of water interests around your proposed works. The results of the survey will help forecast the likely effects of what you propose to do. It will also help set up a baseline for the measurements that you will need to take during test pumping, so we know the present situation and how your activities may change it.

We will give you available information about water sources in the area to help you with the survey, and any other help and advice we can. However, the quality of the survey is your responsibility, and we expect it to be of a high standard.

If the survey or the application itself suggest that your proposed works are likely to have more than negligible effects on the environment, we shall also require you to appraise these effects.