

Live fish movement regulations

New Regulations in England

December 2014

Government will introduce new rules for fish suppliers and fishery owners in England on 19 January 2015. They will come into effect in Wales on 20 January.

The new regulations will replace the current two systems of applying for a consent for each fish stocking operation (under the Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries Act) and holding a licence to keep non-native fish in the wild (under the Import of Live Fish Act). Fish suppliers and fishery owners will still need to apply separately for an authorisation to use nets and electric fishing to crop fish from waters, as at present.

The regulations will continue to protect fisheries and the wider environment from the risks of spreading damaging non-native fish species and fish diseases, and the consequences of inappropriate stocking.

However, they will also reduce the paperwork for fishery managers and fish suppliers by reducing the regulation of routine, low risk fish transfers and allow the Environment Agency to concentrate more on screening fish movements that pose a greater risk to fisheries and the environment.

The Environment Agency will be responsible for the new scheme and we are writing to you now to explain how it will work and what you will need to do to comply.

What is happening... in summary

New regulations will be introduced on 19 January 2015.

Under the new scheme:

- Each stocked fishery will require a single, permanent **Site Permit**;
- Fish suppliers will be issued with a **Supplier Permit**, allowing them to operate;
- Fish suppliers must carry **Consignment Notes** when transporting fish;
- Fish suppliers must send us advance **Notification** when carrying out certain high risk fish movements.

Fish movement consents issued before 19 January under existing regulations will remain valid until their expiry date.

Site Permits

Fisheries in England must have a Site Permit before fish can be stocked into the site, or before non-native fish can be kept at the site. (Fisheries in Wales will need a permit from Natural Resources Wales.) A Site Permit may cover a single still-water, a group of neighbouring still-waters or a section of river. Fish farm waters that form part of an Aquaculture Production Business (under the Aquatic Animal Health Regulations) are not covered by these regulations and do not need a Site Permit.

A Site Permit will be permanent, so will only need to be applied for once. We will issue the permit to a "responsible person", someone with a direct interest in the fishery, for example the fishery owner or manager, or an angling club official. That person will be responsible for making sure that the fishery operates in compliance with the permit.

The Site Permit will list the species that may be stocked into the site and whether and which non-native species may be kept at the site. We will agree this with the applicant, taking into account their plans for the water and any risks the proposed fish movement activities pose to neighbouring fisheries and the wider environment.

Where the fishery is within or near a designated conservation site, for example, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, we may need to consult Natural England, in case the application poses a risk to protected wildlife.

The Site Permit will also include a number of conditions, for example:

- Whether fish being stocked need a health check;
- Whether any inlets or outlets need screening to prevent fish from escaping;
- Whether any non-native species must be removed from the site;

While the Site Permit is permanent, the permit holder may ask us to amend it at any time, to allow them to stock different species or to keep non-native species. The permit may also be transferred to someone else, for example, when a fishery changes hands.

We will also be able to amend or revoke a Site Permit, if necessary, to protect fisheries or wildlife.

Fish Supplier Permits

We can issue a Supplier Permit to anyone wishing to move fish to inland waters in England. Fish suppliers wishing to move fish to fisheries in Wales will need a separate permit from Natural Resources Wales.

We will issue two tiers of Supplier Permit -

- We will issue **Tier 1 permits** to fish supply businesses that are already authorised under the Aquatic Animal Health Regulations;
- We can issue **Tier 2 permits** to other businesses or entities, for example, fishery owners and angling clubs.

The Supplier Permit will allow the permit holder to move fish to inland waters. However, they may only move fish into waters that have a Site Permit and must not breach the conditions of the Site Permit.

Permit holders must:

- Carry consignment notes for fish in transit (see below).
- Notify us in advance of certain, high risk, fish movement operations (see below).

Again, Supplier Permits are permanent, although we can revoke them if necessary.

Consignment notes

Consignment notes record what fish are being moved and their source/destination. They will need to accompany the fish whilst in transit.

We do not expect fish suppliers to duplicate existing transit records: those holding a Tier 1 Supplier Permit will only need to complete the fish movement record book they are required to carry under the Aquatic Animal Health Regulations. Tier 2 suppliers will need to complete a specific form, which we will provide.

Notification

Advance notification will be unnecessary for most fish movement operations. However, Supplier Permit holders will need to tell us two working days in advance of any higher risk operations. This gives us the opportunity to inspect the consignment to ensure it complies with the Site Permit. It will not delay the operation. Notification will need to be by email, fax or post, using a standard template, or by phone (contact details below).

Site Permits will set out the circumstances when a Supplier Permit holder needs to notify us. For Tier 1 permit holders, these will include -

- where the site has a statutory conservation designation, for example a Site of Special Scientific Interest, unless Natural England has agreed to waive the need;
- where the fish being stocked originate from waters containing high-risk invasive non-native species;
- where coarse fish (from any source) are being stocked into rivers;
- where fish (of any species) from a non-fish farm source are moved to rivers or open stillwaters;
- where the permit holder has a record of poor compliance.

Tier 2 permit holders will need to provide advance notification more often.

customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
0345 988 1188
0845 988 1188

www.gov.uk/environment-agency

What will I need to do to comply?

Fishery managers

After 19 January 2015, you will need to apply for a Site Permit before you next want to stock your fishery, or if your fishery contains non-native fish. No application forms are involved - all you need to do is phone or email our Fish Movements Team (01480 483 968 or fmapplications@environment-agency.gov.uk) and we will take it from there.

You will need to think ahead about what species of fish you plan to stock, so that we can issue you with a permit that meets your future aspirations for the fishery while also protecting neighbouring fisheries and the wider environment. We will discuss your application with you and let you know if there are any constraints affecting your fishery, for example, if it affects a protected site and whether we need to consult Natural England. We may arrange with you to visit the site. We will aim to issue the permit, along with the necessary conditions, within 10 working days.

When you next want to move fish to or from the site, you will need to give your fish supplier or contractor a copy of your permit or give them your permit reference number so they can obtain a copy from us.

If you want to alter your permit, simply call or email us and we will make any changes you request, providing they do not increase the risk to neighbouring fisheries or the wider environment. Similarly, if you need to transfer the permit to another person, for example if the fishery changes hands, simply contact us.

Fish suppliers

We will prepare Supplier Permit for anyone who is authorised under the Aquatic Animal Health Regulations. All you need to do is phone us and we will issue you with your permit from 19 January, allowing you to continue to trade without any interruption.

If you are not an authorised fish supplier, for example you are an angling club or fishery owner and want to apply for a Supplier Permit, please call us to apply. We will take the information we need to issue your permit over the phone.

All permits will contain the conditions you will need to comply with.

When a customer places an order for some fish, you will need to ask them for a copy of the relevant Site Permit(s) or let us know the Site Permit reference number so we can email you a copy. You will need to make sure -

- the water has a Site Permit;
- that the Site Permit lists the species you are planning to move;
- that there are no other conditions preventing the planned transfer;
- you have the necessary health checks in place, and have submitted them to the Fish Movements Team;
- you carry a consignment note when moving the fish;
- you notify us two working days in advance, if required by the conditions of the Site Permit.

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Reducing impact on industry

We recognise that introducing any new scheme can have an impact on your business. We also know January is a busy period for some game and coarse fishery managers and suppliers. To limit the impact on your business we will:

- Prepare Site Permits for fisheries with a recent history of regular stocking, so they are ready to issue as quickly as possible when their fishery managers apply on or after 19 January 2015;
- Prepare Supplier Permit for anyone who is already authorised under the Aquatic Animal Health Regulations, so that these can be issued immediately on application on or after 19 January 2015;
- Provide a dedicated telephone service for technical support for applicants - 01480 483 968;
- Provide email and fax templates for Supplier Permit holders (Tier 1 and 2) to complete on the occasions when they are required to notify us of fish movements in advance;
- Provide Tier 2 permit holders with a consignment note to maintain movement records.

Further information

If you have any queries in the meantime, please contact the Fish Movements Team on 01480 483 968 or by email at fmapplications@environment-agency.gov.uk.

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