

New rules on abstracting water – do you need an abstraction licence?

Changes to abstraction licensing means that if you abstract more than 20 metres³ per day, **you now need a licence**. If you are a collection of houses on one borehole supply, or a farm or business that takes water from watercourses (rivers, streams, springs) or pumps from the ground you need a licence.

How do I know if I abstract more than 20 metres³ per day?

20 metres³ is 4400 gallons, similar to a medium sized milk tanker or 260 baths a day.

You can use this table to calculate your maximum daily usage.

Use	Maximum number at any one time	Amount of water needed (in cubic metres)	Total volume per day (in cubic metres)	Number of days a year water is needed (if less than 365)	Total volume per year (in cubic metres)
People		0.2 m ³ per person (45 gallons per day)	m ³		m ³
Dairy cows, when water is used for cooling milk		0.13 m ³ per cow (30 gallons per day)	m ³		m ³
Dairy cows, when refrigerated bulk cooling is used		0.06 m ³ per cow (15 gallons per day)	m ³		m ³
Other cattle		0.04 m ³ per cow (10 gallons per day)	m ³		m ³
Horses		0.04 m ³ per horse (10 gallons per day)	m ³		m ³
Pigs		0.01 m ³ per pig (3 gallons per day)	m ³		m ³
Sheep		0.006 m ³ per sheep (0.2 gallons per day)	m ³		m ³
Poultry		0.0002 m ³ per bird (0.05 gallons per day)	m ³		m ³
Crop spraying for weed, pest, disease control		0.13 m ³ per acre (30 gallons per day)	m ³		m ³
Other uses	-	-	m ³		m ³
Total			m ³		m ³

How do I apply?

You can get an application form from the Environment Agency. You will need to pay an application fee for water abstraction, plus an annual subsistence charge for the quantity of water you are licensed to take.

Submit your application by the end of September 2019 to ensure you are not abstracting unlawfully after the 31 December 2019

Call us on 03708 506 506 or email enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk to find out more. Please quote 'New Authorisations' when contacting us.