Environmental Guidance – Fire Emergencies

Purpose

This guidance note indicates details of how to minimise environmental impacts associated with fire emergencies affecting Wessex Water assets.

Guidance

Sites storing combustible material may require a Fire Prevention Plan as part of the Environmental Permit Management System. Refer to site specific Fire Prevention Plans where available.

On discovery of a fire affecting a Wessex Water asset, members of staff should immediately contact the Fire and Rescue Service and evacuate the workplace – see HSA25, Fire Safety.

The Fire and Rescue Service will be responsible for all actions to contain and control the fire and take appropriate steps to prevent pollution (as outlined in the Environment Agency's National Memorandum of Understanding with the Fire and Rescue Service[1]).

Wessex Water staff should identify any particular areas of concern where pollution may affect treatment infrastructure, particularly where this may affect drinking water quality and make the Fire and Rescue Service aware.

In the event of contaminated fire water being present on site, whilst the Fire and Rescue Service are primarily responsible for dealing with such water during the emergency, it may be necessary (where safe to do so) to:

- Divert contaminated water to storm tanks or storm storage (if available).
- Divert contaminated water to the foul sewer. Before discharging to the foul sewer, the Control Room must be advised so that the relevant Sewerage and Treatment Managers can be contacted to assess the impact on the receiving sewer. Do not discharge to the foul sewer without consent from relevant Operations Sewerage and Treatment manager. Evacuation of staff from the affected site (especially contractors) is also important. Further information is available in TRTWG111, Wastewater operational guide unauthorised discharges affecting STWs and NTKWG004 Guidance on spillage or discharge into sewer.
- Divert contaminated water to spill containment tanks (if available).
- If possible, block access of contaminated water to surface water drainage systems to prevent loss of fire water from site or divert surface water drainage so that fire water does not enter the environment. This can be

[1] http://www.cfoa.org.uk/11488

done by using drain seals, temporary sandbags, soil or sand bunds or absorbent booms in spill kits.
- Consider whether diversion of water to hard standing areas such as car parks is possible (use sandbags, soil or sand to form temporary bunds). Avoid diverting fire water to bare ground to ensure it is not allowed to soak away.

Waste Management

Waste is likely to be generated at incidents where pollution control measures have been employed. Waste types could include:
- Polluted fire water
- soiled materials (including clothing)
- used absorbents
- damaged containers
- contaminated equipment

This waste may be classified as hazardous and should be stored appropriately to prevent further pollution (for example, in a covered skip or on hardstanding with controlled drainage). All waste must be properly classified to determine if it is considered hazardous and disposed of correctly. If unsure of how to dispose of this, contact either the Waste Advisor or environmental team (or see guidance on Source Intranet).

If soil has become contaminated with pollutants, testing will be required to determine the appropriate disposal route or alternative mitigation. Water contaminated by hydrocarbons could be treated using oil/water separators.

Sites with Environmental Permits may have specific Fire Prevention Plans for fire emergencies and fire water as part of an accident management plan.

Where buildings or structures are affected by fire, potential asbestos contamination should be considered. Check the site Asbestos Management Plan to determine whether/where asbestos is present – a hard copy will be on site or available through the Site Information File.

Revision history

Issue	Date	Description	Prepared by	Approved by
1	September 2010	First issue	D Jones	Adrian Stoodley
2	December 2017	Updated with Fire Prevention Plan requirements and minor amendments	Dave Jones	Adrian Stoodley