



**universal**  
**Tanker Group Ltd**

THE NATIONAL TANKER COMPANY

# 2020

## SEPTIC TANK REGULATIONS

If you are responsible for a property with a septic tank, you need to be aware of the new regulations concerning your legal obligations and septic tank discharge standards.

### ACT NOW

New septic tank regulations under the Environment Agency's 'General Binding Rules' came into force on 1 January 2015. In the rules it was outlined that within 5 years, by 2020, all septic tanks that discharged to a watercourse would need to be either replaced or upgraded.

Please read the following information to determine if you are required to take action to avoid breaching regulations and incurring an unlimited fine for non-compliance.



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# 2020 NEW REGULATIONS

## GENERAL BINDING RULES

All sewage effluent discharges, irrespective of age, volume or location, are now subject to Environment Agency General Binding Rules. It is your responsibility, as the 'operator' of septic tank or sewage treatment system, to ensure you comply with these rules. You must apply for a permit if you don't.

The General Binding Rules are available to read at:  
[www.gov.uk/permits-you-need-for-septic-tanks/general-binding-rules](http://www.gov.uk/permits-you-need-for-septic-tanks/general-binding-rules)

## NEW REGULATIONS | 2020

If you currently have a mechanical sewage treatment system please ensure:

1. Your system meets relevant British Standards when it was installed or has BS EN 12566 certification.
2. Your system is big enough to cope with the load. If the system is too small it will not be treating effluent to the right specification.
3. It is maintained at least once a year / in-line with the manufacturer's specifications.

You are also required by law to receive a waste transfer note for all of your emptying - this may be checked should be their be any correspondence with and environmental officer. If these requirements are met, the system should be legal and safe to discharge into a watercourse.

## OPTIONS

Under the new rules, if you have a septic tank that discharges directly into any type of watercourse (a stream, ditch or river etc.) you should have replaced or upgraded your system by 1st January 2020. The government has advised that, if these upgrades have not yet been made, you must have plans in place to carry out this work within a reasonable timescale, typically 12 months.

There are three main ways in which you can comply with the new regulations. Each option has site specific conditions to consider.

### 1. Swap your Septic Tank for a Sewage Treatment System

Unlike a septic tank, a sewage treatment system uses mechanical components to help break down solids, treating sewage so that it is no longer harmful or dangerous to the environment.

### 2. Install a Drainage Field

This will take the waste water from your septic tank and disperse it safely into the ground without causing pollution

### 3. Connect your existing Septic Tank to a Mains Sewer

Your local water company will be able to advise whether or not connection to mains sewer is a feasible solution. Most septic tanks will have been installed as a result of not being close enough to connect to mains sewer - so this is a less likely option.

**SCOTLAND  
& WALES**



If your property resides in Scotland or Wales, you **MUST** have your septic tank or sewage treatment plant registered with either SEPA (Scotland) or Natural Resources (Wales). For the full list of rules regarding the new legislation in Scotland and Wales visit 'Natural Resources Wales' or the 'SEPA' Website.