

Abu Dhabi launches region's first comprehensive framework for wastewater regulation

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The Regulation and Supervision Bureau (RSB), the independent regulatory body for the water, wastewater and electricity sector of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, announces the launch of two important new regulations coming into effect today. This concludes a three-year consultation process across the wastewater sector.

Trade Effluent Control Regulations 2010

The Trade Effluent Control Regulations govern all non-domestic discharges into the emirate's sewerage system. Previously, there were no formal controls over what businesses were allowed to discharge. This posed a risk to the wastewater treatment system and to the environment.

Under the new regulations, wastewater operating companies, including ADSSC and ZonesCorp, are empowered to require companies to obtain a consent for their wastewater before discharging it into the sewerage system. Sewerage services companies are also required to maintain trade effluent registers recording the activities of organisations discharging wastewater into the system.

Recycled Water and Biosolids Regulations 2010

Recycled water and biosolids are the treated products of the wastewater treatment process and a valuable resource for meeting the emirate's sustainable development goals. The Recycled Water and Biosolids Regulations ensure for the first time the standards of treated wastewater in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. These standards will maximise the opportunity to reuse products in environmentally beneficial ways.

Sewerage services companies are now required to guarantee the quality of the wastewater delivered to users. This quality assurance will increase the use of recycled water and biosolids. The increase can provide a useful material for soil improvement and help to reduce demand for energy-intensive desalination.

Following the launch of the two regulations the RSB will agree compliance programmes with all relevant licencees to ensure they conform to the regulations within the appropriate timeframe.

Nick Carter, Director General of the RSB, said:

"These two regulations are among the most important the Bureau has issued since we were established over ten years ago. As the emirate continues with its ambitious plans for growth these regulations mark a key milestone in the supply of wastewater products. Under the governance of a panel drawn from experts within the sector and from licencees Abu Dhabi now has a mechanism in place to ensure the highest international standards of recycled water and biosolids. This is helped, in part, by a check for the first time on what businesses are putting into the sewerage system.

"The consultation process has been long and thorough. I would like to thank all those who have contributed towards making these regulations as relevant and workable as possible. With input from such a broad range of interested parties we have strong support from within the sector for the new legal framework. We look forward to working closely with all wastewater licencees to ensure effective compliance."

Regulation consultation timetable

- September 2007: Initiation meeting with ADSSC, EAD, Abu Dhabi Municipality Parks and Recreational Facilities Department
- June-July 2008: First Public consultation to establish need for regulation: 10 hard documents issued, plus press notice, 12 detailed responses received
- December 2008-May 2009: Regulatory Impact Assessment carried out by independent consultants

- April-May 2009: Second Public consultation: Consultation on draft regulations, 20 hard copies issued to licensees and government agencies. Range of e-mails sent, consultation advertised on website. 25 detailed responses
- March-April 2010: Final consultation on draft regulations and guidance documents - targeting licensees and key stakeholders. 19 formal responses sent plus posted on website. 13 formal responses
- March 2010: Consultation Workshop: 37 attendees plus 10 Bureau representatives
- 1 June 2010: Launch of regulations

Regulation and Supervision Bureau (RSB)

- Established in 1999 to ensure the safe, reliable and efficient delivery of power, water and wastewater services in the Emirates of Abu Dhabi.
- Consults closely and continuously with companies operating in these sectors to controls prices, issue regulations, ensure compliance and investigate any health or safety incidents.

Key objectives:

- ensure future capacity and product availability matches customer demand and meets the 2030 Government Strategic Vision;
- promote optimal utilisation of water, wastewater and electricity;
- minimise unit costs at all levels;
- ensure quality-of-service standards are met at all times;
- promote health and safety by all stakeholders; and
- minimise environmental impacts from the activities of the sector.