

Northern Ireland Water

Public Information Leaflet

on

The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR)

Note: **This guide is an overview of some of the main provisions of the Regulations and should not be regarded as a legal interpretation.**

1. What do the Environmental Information Regulations do?

The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) give certain rights of access to Environmental Information.

You can also get information under:

- The Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) which, amongst other things, gives individuals access to their own personal information.
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) which gives people the right to request non-personal, non-environmental information from public authorities.

2. How do I get information from NI Water under the Environmental Regulations?

Requests for Environmental Information do not need to be in writing. They can quite legitimately be made in person, by telephone, left on voicemail or by email, fax or letter.

If you are making a request verbally it is recommended you keep a note of the person you speak to and the outcome of the conversation as you may wish to follow this up at a later date. Ideally a written request is most appropriate as this is written proof of your request.

4. How long does it take to get information?

All EIR requests must be responded to in writing within 20 working days; unless there are exceptional circumstances where the information requested has been of a complex and voluminous nature. In cases where the response period has had to be extended by a further 20 working days, notification must be sent to you informing you of this delay during the first 20 days of your initial request.

Sometimes we might need to contact you in order to clarify exactly what information you are interested in.

It will help us to process your request more quickly if you can be as specific as possible about what information it is you want. Please make sure that you provide us with your name and address and a contact telephone number.

5. Is there a cost for getting information?

This depends on a number of factors including the volume of material requested. Responses to enquiries that cost NI Water less than £450 to process¹ will normally be provided free of charge, although there may be a small charge for the costs of photocopying, printing and postage.

NI Water will charge for requests above £450 but only after the Applicant was offered advice and assistance to make the request smaller so that it could be processed free of charge.

6. What happens if the information I want is not available?

We will contact you and tell you what information we do hold that might help to answer your query or suggest another public authority that may hold the information you are looking for.

If NI Water cannot respond to your request and has exhausted all its potential possibilities to obtain the information we will simply send you a refusal notice stating that we do not hold the information.

7. What if I am refused information?

We will tell you if information is being withheld and why. We will also tell you who you should contact to request an internal review if you are not happy with our decision. And if you are still not happy after the internal review you can request a review by the Information Commissioner (see details below). Please contact us first if you are not happy with our response and tell us why you believe that we are wrongly withholding information from you.

8. Where can I get more information about the Environmental Regulations (EIR)?

You can get more information about EIR from the Office of the Information Commissioner. The Commissioner's details are:

Website: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk
Phone: 01625 545 700
Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk
Post: Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, CHESHIRE SK9 5AF

¹ Includes the cost of finding, sorting or redacting the material