

SEPA Advice Note

Repair work in rivers after recent floods

Purpose

Significant engineering works in rivers require authorisation under the Controlled Activities Regulations (CAR) 2011. However repair works and smaller scale activities do not require contact with SEPA before proceeding. In addition, the Regulations allow emergency works to be carried out under certain conditions. This note aims to assist land managers who need to carry out river works after flood damage. **If in doubt, please contact your local SEPA office for advice.** You can find your [nearest SEPA office](#) on our web site.

Activities that can be carried out without contacting SEPA:

- Works to **repair or replace** structures, like for like, that have failed or washed away. This includes embankments and bridges.
- Removing **vegetation**.
- Removing **fallen trees or litter**.
- Dredging **small straightened ditches**, of less than 1m width across the bed (regulated under a General Binding Rule, GBR 5).
- **Dredging within closed culverts**, and up to 10m either side (regulated under a General Binding Rule, GBR 13).

If you plan to operate a vehicle in the river for the purpose of repairing or replacing lost or damaged structures, you **will** need to apply to SEPA for a registration before commencing any work.

Emergency works

Other large scale sediment removal activities or bank protection works will require a registration or a licence, and where a river has undergone significant change it is particularly important to contact SEPA.

SEPA can accelerate the application process in emergency situations – where there is a risk to life and property, or disruption to transport, water supply and energy supply. In particularly urgent circumstances a ‘verbal’ authorisation can be granted to ensure the work can be carried out without delay. Again, in these situations please contact your local SEPA office as soon as possible.

You can find details of SEPA local [office locations](#) on our web site.

You can find details of General Binding Rules and authorisation requirements from Page 30 (Engineering Activities) of the [CAR Practical Guide](#) on our web site.