

YOUR 2018-2019 CHARGING SCHEME INVOICE EXPLAINED

From 1st April, 2018 a number of new activities have been included under SEPA's Charging Scheme for the first time. To help our customers understand these changes, the following frequently asked questions outlines why you received an invoice and what's been introduced under this year's Charging Scheme.

Why have I received an invoice?

SEPA raises invoices to recover the costs it incurs regulating, monitoring and reporting the environmental impact of Operators activities. These costs are referred to as subsistence costs and we are required to recover these costs from authorisation holders. This invoice is for annual subsistence charges related to your authorisation.

Why have I received an invoice for the first time?

In 2016-17 SEPA introduced the Environmental Regulation (Scotland) charging scheme, at that time we said that would consult in future years as we developed the new scheme. We consulted with our stakeholders in October 2017. We considered the feedback from this consultation and have amended our original proposals where we believe there are unintended consequences or further review is required.

Overall the main changes made to the scheme from 1 April 2018 are:

1) **Hydro Schemes: 0.1 - 2 MW**

Hydro Schemes (0.1 – 2 MW) will be receiving an annual subsistence charge invoice for the first time.

These schemes represent a large proportion of abstractions in Scotland and require direct regulation, monitoring and reporting work by SEPA, previously this had not been charged.

2) **Discharges to Water that are Not Monitored**

If you are a small hotel, restaurant or housing scheme etc. with a population equivalent of 50 - 100, you will receive a subsistence charge invoice for the first time. These types of discharge are included in the overall environmental monitoring work programme, and SEPA incurs costs for this work.

Why have my charges changed from 2017-18?

We have applied an inflationary increase to 2017/18 charges to arrive at the 2018/19 charges. This is included in the regulatory and environmental component of the charge.

Where chargeable, the environmental component has been updated to reflect the 3 year average based on data returns provided on air and water emissions and waste throughput.

There was also a review of charges based on sector compliance.

Lastly, your charges are impacted by the five year transition arrangements put in place help manage the financial consequences of implementing Environmental Regulation (Scotland) scheme from 1 April 2016. 2018/18 is the third year of phasing in the new charges.

Which site does it relate to?

Your invoice should contain the site detail. This is located in the **Your reference** section on of the invoice. Please contact the SEPA Contact Centre on 01698 839 029 if the description does not have enough detail to clearly identify the site, or if this information is incorrect.

I am not carrying out the activity so why do I need to pay charges?

If you have stopped the authorised activity or do not intend to operate for a long period you should contact the local regulatory team to discuss the authorisation surrender process, information is also available on the SEPA website. Charges will cease from the date the surrender process is completed.

SEPA Contact Centre on 01698 839 029 will be able to help you to contact the right team.

Why have I received an invoice when I have applied for a Mothballed/ Fallow (non-operational) Exemption?

If you have applied for a mothballed/fallow exemption you will have received an invoice for 15% of the annual activity charge for the period.

There are a large number of permits that cover activities that go through periods when they do not operate (for example fallow fish farms and irrigation permits) although ongoing work is still required for these licences.

Following the consultation, SEPA have introduced a 15% charge of the annual activity charge for the period of agreed inactivity. There is a minimum of 6 months (12 months for irrigation or other seasonal licences¹) and a maximum of 2 years that can be mothballed at a time, although a further application to mothball a site can be made prior to the expiry of the previous one. Please see https://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/authorisations-and-permits/application-forms/#fee_waiver for further information.

My licence has been surrendered or revoked. Why do I still need to pay?

If you have applied for a surrender or revocation and you have still received an invoice please contact the local regulatory team to ensure that the application has been received and processed through our system. SEPA Contact Centre on 01698 839 029 will be able to help you to contact the right team.

No one told me about SEPA charges when I bought the site/farm/premises and the previous owner is no longer here.

¹ A seasonal licence is where the permit restricts which months that the activity is permitted. For example many irrigation licences are only allowed to abstract from April through to October.

It is the purchaser's responsibility to check for any authorisation that are held or should be held. Some licences apply to premises while others are to an individual or company. Non-payment of charges may mean you are operating illegally.

The information on my invoice is incorrect, who do I contact?

If you think that any of the information on the invoice is incorrect in the first instance can you please contact the SEPA Contact Centre on 01698 839 029. They will record the issue and pass on the to appropriate SEPA contact.

I will have difficulty paying this invoice, can I contact someone regarding this?

We are able to offer payment plans to spread the cost of your annual charges over the year. If you would like more information please contact the SEPA Contact Centre on 01698 839029 who will record your information and pass on to the appropriate SEPA Contact.

I require a purchase order for this invoice, who do I contact?

If you require a purchase order please email invoice@sepa.org.uk with your name and account details, or alternatively contact the SEPA Contact Centre on 01698 839 029 who will record your information and pass on the to appropriate SEPA contact.

Where can I find out more information on Charging Schemes?

The charging scheme section of the website contains information on how we interpret and apply charges.

<https://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/authorisations-and-permits/charging-schemes/charging-schemes-and-summary-charging-booklets/>

Where can I find out more information on the Consultation?

The consultation closed on 10 November 2017 but all documents relation to it can be found at the address below.

<https://consultation.sepa.org.uk/>