BRMCA Best Practice

Managing Concrete Wash Waters on Site

The Environment Agency Regulation Position Statement 107 (RP 107) *Managing concrete wash waters on construction sites: good practice and temporary discharge to ground or surface waters* was published in June 2011. Where the contractor complies with the requirements of RP 107 the Environment Agency will allow the discharge of concrete wash waters from some construction sites to ground or to surface waters without the need for an environmental permit.

Accepting that it is the contractor's responsibility to comply with RP 107 it is important that ready-mixed concrete suppliers also adopt best practice. Best practice is conforming to all the anti-pollution measures as directed by responsible site personnel and also minimise the amount of any water used for essential cleaning of the ready-mixed concrete truck.

A truck mixer must be cleaned on completion of discharge for two reasons:

- for safety in that discharge chutes, and bodywork where necessary, must be cleaned of residues to ensure that aggregate or concrete particles are not deposited on the public highway where they would be a potential hazard to pedestrians and other road users.

- the blades and internal wall of the mixer drum must be cleaned to prevent build-up which will adversely affect vehicle weight and mixing efficiency in the long term

When delivering concrete to site, you must:

1. On arrival, and unless clearly directed, you must ask the site personnel where cleaning of the truck mixer is to be carried out and if there are any special measures to be taken to avoid pollution.

2. The quantity of wash water used to clean the truck mixer on completion of discharge must be kept to an absolute minimum. This is best achieved by:

   i) using a scraper or brush to remove as much concrete residue as possible from the discharge chutes, and bodywork where necessary, before using any water.

   ii) Unless specifically directed otherwise by your supervisor or manager the mixer drum should be rotating the in "charge mode" to ensure the water used to clean the blades and internal wall is contained within the drum for later recycling.

3. On certain sites you may be directed to discharge wash water into a designated treatment facility, e.g. lined skip, lined pit or purpose-built treatment unit.

4. Under no circumstances are you permitted to discharge wash water directly to any watercourse.

For further information from BRMCA please contact Chris A Clear at chris.clear@mineralproducts.org or telephone 07976 546941.

Chris A Clear, 31 October 2012