

## Environmental Performance Assessment Scheme (EPAS)

## March 2025

# Glossary of terms

<Report date here (month, year)>

| **Term** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| CAR | Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 as amended in 2013, 2017 and 2021 |
| CAS | Compliance Assessment Scheme |
| Category 1 environmental event | Events that are likely to have caused the most serious environmental harm. |
| Category 2 environmental event | Events where more serious environmental harm has or is likely to have occurred. |
| Category 3 environmental event | Events likely to have resulted in localised, minor effects. |
| Category 4 environmental event | Events likely to have immediately self-resolved or caused no ascertainable impact. |
| Compliance recovery plan | A plan that includes reasonable steps to resolve non-compliance in a timely manner. |
| Compliance issues | An operator is found to be either ‘non-compliant’ or ‘major non-compliant’.  |
| Compliance verification | Checking compliance with a legal environmental requirement (this could be planned or reactive). |
| Compliant | Full compliance with authorisation conditions, environmental legal requirements and payment of annual charges. |
| EASR | Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations 2018 This includes activities we regulate involving the use of radioactive substances. It is expected that EASR will be amended in November 2025 to include activities we currently regulate under CAR, PPC and WML (activities we regulate for water, industrial activities and waste management). |
| Environmental event | An incident that has either caused or is likely to have caused environmental harm. |
| Environmental harm | We use the same definition of ‘environmental harm’ as Section 17(2) of the [Regulatory Reform (Scotland) Act 2014](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/3/data.pdf). Environmental harm means:1. Harm to the health of human beings or other living organisms.
2. Harm to the quality of the environment, including:
	1. Harm to the quality of the environment taken as a whole.
	2. Harm to the quality of air, water or land, and
	3. Other impairment of, or interference with, ecosystems.
3. Offence to the senses of human beings.
4. Damage to property, or
5. Impairment of, or interference with, amenities or other legitimate uses of the environment.
 |
| Environmental performance rating | There are three environmental performance ratings: ‘Good’, ‘Below Expectations’ or ‘Unacceptable’. |
| EPAS | Environmental Performance Assessment Scheme |
| General Binding Rules | General Binding Rules (GBRs): are mandatory rules that apply to low-risk activities described in the Regulations. With the exception of agricultural GBRs, these low-risk activities are generally not included in our planned inspection programme. However, there are occasions where we may identify compliance issues e.g. as part of our response to an environmental event. Where compliance issues are identified, we intend to include these in EPAS.  |
| Major non-compliance | An operator was found to be ‘Major non-compliant’.  |
| Major non-compliant | Non-compliance with an authorisation condition and/or environmental legal requirement that is of higher environmental significance. Very late or non-payment of annual charges.  |
| Notification | Notification is a type of authorisation. Notifications are for lower-risk activities where we do not need to decide whether to grant or refuse an activity, but we must be notified the activity is being carried out and who is carrying out the activity. Compliance verification for notifications means checking operators have told us they will be doing that activity. It is our intention to assess notification non-compliance as part of EPAS.  |
| Non-compliance  | This can mean an operator was categorised as ‘Non-compliant’ **or** an operator was found to be non-compliant generally (categorised as ‘Non-compliant’ or ‘Major non-compliant’). |
| Non-compliant | Non-compliance with an authorisation condition and/or environmental legal requirement that is generally of lower environmental significance. Late payment of annual charges. |
| Operator | Relevant authorised person, business or organisation. |
| Our | The Scottish Environment Protection Agency |
| Our environment | Scotland’s environment |
| Permit | Permit is a type of authorisation. Permits are for higher risk or non-standard activities. A permit may include Standard Conditions, and any other conditions that we believe are required to mitigate the risk of environmental harm from the activity (these are referred to as bespoke conditions). Compliance verification means checking that permit conditions have been met. This could include limits for discharging substances, providing data at specified times, having appropriate management plans in place and paying fees. A performance rating will be calculated for all operators that hold permits. |
| PPC | Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations 2012 |
| Priority site | Where the relevant operator remains Unacceptable for more than 90 days with no compliance recovery plan in place and / or is causing category 1 or 2 environmental harm. |
| REACH | Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals |
| Registration  | Registration is a type of authorisation. Registrations are for lower risk activities that require a simple assessment prior to us deciding whether to grant or refuse the activities. Registrations are issued to the authorised person with Standard Conditions. Compliance verification means checking that the standard conditions have been met. A performance rating will be calculated for all operators when we check compliance. |
| Regulatory regime | SEPA’s functional approach to splitting up regulated activities, such as by water, waste, industrial activities, radioactive substances. |
| SAC | Special Area of Conservation |
| SEPA | Scottish Environment Protection Agency  |
| Types of authorisation | General binding rule, Notification, Registration, Permit |
| We | The Scottish Environment Protection Agency |
| WML | Waste Management Licensing (Scotland) Regulations 2011 |

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