

MCERTS Bulletin 17
Self monitoring of effluent flow for PPC/EPR sites.
What do Operators need to do?

MCERTS for the self-monitoring of effluent flow has been introduced to ensure that flow data sent to the Environment Agency is reliable and accurate. It already applies to the Water Utilities and is being extended to PPC/EPR installations. If you have a PPC/EPR permit and effluent flow monitoring is included as one of the conditions, for example, as a requirement to report total volumes discharged, the scheme will apply to your installation. It is your responsibility to ensure effluent flow monitoring is being carried out properly. Effluent flow monitoring includes discharges to river, watercourses, the sea and public sewers.

The scheme operates as follows:

- MCERTS Inspectors are appointed by Sira Certification Service who run the scheme on behalf of the Environment Agency. The scheme is delivered through a number of companies operating in a commercially competitive market. Operators place a contract with one of the companies employing MCERTS Inspectors. Details of companies employing MCERTS Inspectors can be found at www.siraenvironmental.com/mcerts
- The Environment Agency has set a total daily volume target of better than $\pm 8\%$ uncertainty for effluent flow monitoring systems. MCERTS Inspectors will check this during their inspection.
- Following the inspection, the MCERTS Inspector prepares a report detailing whether the flow monitoring arrangements meet the MCERTS requirements. This includes an assessment of the flow application, type of flow measurement device and the effectiveness of the site maintenance arrangements.
- The Management System for flow monitoring also needs to be assessed. Currently, only Sira can conduct a Management Systems audit. In future, other UKAS accredited Certification Bodies that have MCERTS for flow included in their scope will be able to conduct these audits. This can be, for example, your existing ISO 14001/9001 auditor.
- Sira checks the MCERTS Inspector's report and the management systems audit report. If the MCERTS requirements are met Sira will issue an MCERTS Site Conformity Inspection Certificate, valid for five years.

Detailed guidance on what is expected can be found in the MCERTS standard "Minimum requirements for the self-monitoring of effluent flow". This can be found at www.mcerts.net. Guidance can be found at www.siraenvironmental.com/mcerts

The scheme was implemented for PPC installations from February 2007. All installations with an effluent flow requirement in their permit had to be inspected under the MCERTS scheme by 31 December 2008. Any corrective actions that are necessary to achieve the MCERTS standard will be introduced as an improvement condition, time scale to be agreed with your local Environment Agency Officer. Any new or replacement flow monitoring arrangements covered by the permit must meet the MCERTS standard when installed.

Additional advice can be obtained by contacting the Environment Agency, Sira or any of the MCERTS Inspection companies. Contact details can be found at www.mcerts.net and www.siraenvironmental.com/mcerts

Self monitoring of effluent flow - frequently asked questions

Why is the Environment Agency doing this?

The Environment Agency needs reliable flow data so that it can model the impact of effluent discharges on the environment.

How much will it cost?

It will depend on the complexity of your installation's effluent flow arrangements. It is up to you to negotiate a price with an MCERTS Inspection company for the site inspection. You will also need to employ Sira, or another UKAS accredited Certification Body (with MCERTS for flow included in its scope) for the management system audit. There will also be a charge from Sira for checking the MCERTS Inspector report and the management system audit report prior to issuing the MCERTS Site Conformity Inspection Certificate.

How do I know if my effluent flow monitoring is included in the scheme?

If effluent flow monitoring, including discharges to public sewer, is in your permit, then it is included in the scheme. There is no de-minimus, if flow is important enough to be in the permit, it is included in the MCERTS scheme.

What happens if flow monitoring cannot meet the MCERTS requirements?

The MCERTS Inspector will provide guidance on what is needed to improve or modify the flow monitoring arrangements so that the $\pm 8\%$ uncertainty target for total daily volume can be achieved. Your management system auditor will help you to make sure that your system can achieve the MCERTS requirements. See also Bulletin 11

What happens if there are significant costs to improve my effluent flow monitoring?

You should contact your local Environment Agency Officer to discuss the requirements and time scale for making improvements.

Why does the scheme require a management system audit?

Inspection by the MCERTS Inspector is carried out every five years. A properly applied management system will ensure that procedures are in place to maintain the necessary calibration and maintenance at an appropriate frequency.

What happens if I make changes to my flow monitoring arrangements after receiving an MCERTS Site Conformity Inspection Certificate?

If the changes could impact on flow monitoring you must contact an MCERTS Inspector to discuss what is required. If the changes are significant there may be a need for re-certification.

Does the scheme include all flow monitoring?

MCERTS currently only applies to effluent flow monitoring. This may be extended in the future.

Will the MCERTS Inspector look at other flow monitoring?

MCERTS Inspectors will probably be able to provide guidance on other flow monitoring facilities on your installation, although this is not a MCERTS requirement.

Where can I obtain more advice?

Contact an MCERTS Inspection company, Sira or the Environment Agency. Contact details are at www.mcerts.net and www.siraenvironmental.com/mcerts