

---

STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

---

**1999 No. 3**

**WATER AND SEWERAGE**

**The Protection of Water Against Agricultural Nitrate  
Pollution (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999**

*Made* - - - - *7th January 1999*

*Coming into operation* *1st March 1999*

The Department of the Environment and the Department of Agriculture, being departments designated<sup>(1)</sup> for the purposes of section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972<sup>(2)</sup> in relation to measures relating to the prevention, reduction and elimination of pollution of water, acting jointly in exercise of the powers conferred on them by that section and of every other power enabling them in that behalf, hereby make the following Regulations:

**Citation, commencement and interpretation**

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Protection of Water Against Agricultural Nitrate pollution (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 and shall come into operation on 1st March 1999.

(2) In these Regulations, “the principal Regulations” means the Protection of Water Against Agricultural Nitrate Pollution Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996<sup>(3)</sup>.

(3) The Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954<sup>(4)</sup> shall apply to these Regulations as it applies to a Measure of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

**Amendment of the principal Regulations**

2.—(1) The principal Regulations shall be amended as provided by paragraphs (2) to (7).

(2) In Regulation 2, for the definition of “nitrate vulnerable zone” there shall be substituted—  
““nitrate vulnerable zone” means an area of land designated pursuant to regulation 3(2) (including an area of land designated pursuant to that regulation following a review pursuant to regulation 3(3));” .

(3) For regulation 3 there shall be substituted—

---

(1) S.I. 1989/2393  
(2) 1972 c. 68  
(3) S.R. 1996 No. 217  
(4) 1954 c. 33 (N.I.)

**“Nitrate vulnerable zones**

3—(1) The Departments shall identify, in accordance with the criteria set out in Schedule 1, waters affected by pollution and waters which could be affected by pollution if action pursuant to regulation 6 is not taken.

(2) The Departments shall designate as vulnerable zones all known areas of land which drain into the waters identified in accordance with paragraph (1) which contribute to pollution.

(3) The Departments shall, as soon as practicable and then by 19th December 2001 and at least every 4 years thereafter, review and if necessary revise or add to the designation of nitrate vulnerable zones made pursuant to paragraph (2) to take into account changes and factors unforeseen at the time of the previous designation.

(4) For the purpose of facilitating a review carried out pursuant to paragraph (3) the Departments shall, in accordance with the criteria set out in Schedule 1, review and if necessary revise or add to the identification of waters made pursuant to paragraph (1)

(5) The Departments shall give notice of any designation, or of any revision of any designation, of a nitrate vulnerable zone under paragraph (2) in such form and manner as they consider appropriate for the purpose of bringing the designation or revision to the attention of persons likely to be affected by it and a notice given pursuant to this paragraph shall state where a map showing the area of the designated or revised nitrate vulnerable zone may be inspected.”.

(4) For regulation 5 there shall be substituted—

**“Code of good agricultural practice**

5. With the aim of providing for all waters a general level of protection against pollution, the Department of Agriculture shall—

(a) establish a code of good agricultural practice, to be implemented by farmers on a voluntary basis, which should contain provisions covering at least the items mentioned in Schedule 2A;

(b) set up where necessary a programme, including the provision of training and information for farmers, promoting the application of the code of good agricultural practice.”.

(5) In regulation 6(3)—

(a) for sub-paragraph (a) there shall be substituted—

“(a) in the case of a nitrate vulnerable zone designated pursuant to regulation 3(2) before the initial review pursuant to regulation 3(3), as soon as practicable; and”;

(b) in sub-paragraph (b), for “in accordance with regulation 3(2)” there shall be substituted “pursuant to regulation 3(2) following a review pursuant to regulation 3(3)”.

(6) In regulation 7(1)(b), for the words “referred to in” there shall be substituted “established pursuant to”.

(7) The following Schedule shall be added after Schedule 2.

“SCHEDULE 2A

**Code of Good Agricultural Practice**

A code of good agricultural practice established pursuant to regulation 5 shall contain provisions covering the following items, in so far as they are relevant and taking account of the objective or reducing pollution by nitrates and of conditions in different regions:

1. periods when the land application of fertilizer is inappropriate;

2. the land application of fertilizer to steeply sloping ground;
3. the land application of fertilizer to water-saturated, flooded, frozen or snow-covered ground;
4. the conditions for land application of fertilizer near water courses;
5. the capacity and construction of storage vessels for livestock manures, including measures to prevent water pollution by run-off and seepage into the groundwater and surface water of liquids containing livestock manures and effluents from stored plant materials such as silage;
6. procedures for the land application, including rate and uniformity of spreading, of both chemical fertilizer and livestock manure, that will maintain nutrient losses to water at an acceptable level.”.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of Environment on

L.S.

7th January 1999.

*C. D. Smith*  
Assistant Secretary

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of Agriculture on

L.S.

7th January 1999.

*Liam McKibben*  
Assistant Secretary

**Status:** This is the original version (as it was originally made). This item of legislation is currently only available in its original format.

---

## EXPLANATORY NOTE

*(This note is not part of the Regulations.)*

These Regulations amend the Protection of Water Against Agricultural Nitrate Pollution Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996, (“the 1996 Regulations”) which made provision in relation to Council Directive [91/676/EEC](#) concerning the protection of waters against pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources.

Regulation 2(3) replaces existing regulation 3 of the 1996 Regulations with a new regulation setting out the duty in the Directive to identify nitrate polluted waters and to designate as nitrate vulnerable zones all known areas of land which drain into the identified waters and contribute to the nitrate pollution. The designation of nitrate vulnerable zones has to be reviewed every 4 years and revised and added to if necessary. To avoid having to amend regulation 3 every time there is a review new regulation 3 imposes a duty to carry out the reviews and adjustments to the nitrate vulnerable zone designations but provides for the actual designations to be made pursuant to the regulation rather than by means of setting out the designations in the regulation itself.

Regulation 2(4) replaces existing regulation 5 of the 1996 Regulations with a new regulation. Existing regulation 5 establishes the code of good agricultural practice required by the Directive. New regulation 5 instead sets out the duty to establish the code rather than establishing the code itself. This will enable the code to be reviewed and updated without having to amend regulation 5.

Regulation 2(7) inserts a new Schedule into the 1996 Regulations containing the provisions which have to be contained in the code. Regulation 2(6) makes an amendment which is consequential on new Regulation 5.