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## EXPLANATORY NOTE

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

These Regulations implement the following Directives:

Council Directive [2008/50/EC](#) on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (this Directive replaces Council Directive [96/62/EC](#) on ambient air quality assessment and management, Council Directive [1999/30/EC](#) relating to limits for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead in ambient air, Council Directive [2000/69/EC](#) relating to limit values for benzene and carbon monoxide in ambient air, Council Directive [2002/3/EC](#) relating to ozone in ambient air).

Council Directive [2004/107/EC](#) relating to arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in ambient air.

These Regulations replace the Air Quality Standards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 ([S.R. 2007 No.265](#)) which are revoked.

Part 1 of the Regulations deals with definitions and designates the Department as the competent authority for the purposes of Council Directives [2008/50/EC](#) and [2004/107/EC](#).

Part 2 of the Regulations deals with assessment of ambient air quality. Chapter 1 relates to assessment of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter, lead, benzene and carbon monoxide. Chapter 2 relates to assessment of ozone, and Chapter 3 relates to assessment of arsenic, cadmium, nickel, mercury, benzo(a)pyrene and other polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

Part 3 of the Regulations sets out the duties Northern Ireland departments shall take in relation to the limit values, target values, long-term objectives, information and alert thresholds and critical levels for the protection of vegetation which are set out in Schedules 2 to 6.

Part 4 of the Regulations deals with requirements in relation to PM<sub>2.5</sub> in addition to the limit value and target value for this pollutant.

Part 5 of the Regulations imposes requirements on the Department, after consultation with other Northern Ireland departments, to draw up air quality plans in relation to limit values and target values and short-term action plans in relation to alert thresholds. Short-term action plans may also be used in relation to limit values and target values.

Part 6 of the Regulations relates to public information.

Schedule 1 of the Regulations sets out the requirements for the siting of sampling points for the assessment of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter, lead, benzene and carbon monoxide.

Schedules 2 to 6 set out limit values, target values, long-term objectives for ozone, information and alert thresholds and critical levels for the protection of vegetation.

Schedule 7 sets out the information to be included in air quality plans.

Schedule 8 sets out the public information to be provided in relation to concentration of pollutants.

A full Impact Assessment of the effect that this Rule will have on the costs of business and the voluntary sector is available from the Atmosphere and Local Environment Division, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Ergon House, Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 3JR.