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Feature

Solvent Emissions Directive

Meeting the SED deadline

01 June 2006

The Solvent Emissions Directive (SED) is being implemented in the UK by the Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations (England and Wales) 2000. Drycleaners will have to apply for a permit to operate. Applications must be in and accepted by 31 October. Senior environmental health officer Fay Rushby gives her tips for making sure you meet the deadline

Get an application form.

Your local District or Borough Council should have sent you an application form already. If you have not received one – make sure that you ask for one!

Read the application form and understand what information is required.

Take a photocopy of the application form and complete a rough or "draft" version. This will give you time get additional information or seek help if you do not understand what you need to do.

Complete your application form *fully and correctly*.

Application forms that are missing information, that are not signed, or are not accompanied by the correct application fee will not be accepted by your "regulator" (the district or Borough Council) as being "duly made".

Having your regulator confirm that your application is "duly made" is an important legal step in the application process. You will be breaking the law if you continue to operate your drycleaning machine after the 31 October 2006 without having had your application accepted as "duly made". If in doubt – get someone to help you with your application, and get the regulator to confirm in writing that your application has been accepted as "duly made".

Submit your application well before the 31 October 2006.

Don't leave your application to the last minute in case there is a problem with your application and your regulator has not considered it "duly made" in time. If your application has not been "duly made", you will be breaking the law if you continue to operate your drycleaning machine after the 31 October 2006.

Keep track of your solvent emissions - don't emit more than 20g of solvent per kilogram of clothes cleaned.

You will have to prove that your drycleaning machine is capable of meeting the solvent emission limit of 20g of solvent per kilogram of clothes cleaned. You will need to:

- keep detailed records of the weight of clothes cleaned
- keep detailed records of the drycleaning solvent added to

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your machine, and

- keep detailed records of the drycleaning solvent residue sent for disposal.

If your machine cannot meet the solvent emission limit, you will have more time to take action. Provided that you have submitted a "duly made" application, you will be allowed to continue to operate your drycleaning machine until the 31 October 2007 even if it does not meet the solvent emission limit.

Look after your drycleaning machine and operate it efficiently.

You should operate your drycleaning machine loaded as fully as the materials to be cleaned will allow. Try to minimise part loads. Always use scales to weigh your loads.

Regular checks and machine maintenance are essential to ensure that solvent recovery is efficient as possible, for example keeping the lint filter clean and checking for solvent leaks.

Make sure that you undertake regular maintenance as recommended by the manufacturer or supplier of your drycleaning equipment.

It is good practice to make a list of the things that you check, and this can include routine servicing by your drycleaning machine engineer.

Store your drycleaning solvents safely and away from drains.

Keep all drycleaning solvents and still residues out of harms way! Store them in solvent resistant containers, on solvent impermeable surfaces and away from drains that could be contaminated if you have a solvent spillage or solvent leak.

Check if you are a new or existing installation.

If the shop started operating as a dry cleaner after the 1 April 2001, it will be classed as a "new" installation. If you are a new installation, you may need to make some upgrades to your drycleaning machine and will need to apply for your permit earlier than 31 October 2006.

Machines in new installations must be fitted with:

- a second water separator
- an activated carbon filter bed to treat contact water from the second separator

In addition a continuous perc monitor must be installed in new installations to warn of solvent leaks.

Machines installed after 19 May 2005 must meet higher standards.

If your machine was installed after the 19 May 2005, whether new or second-hand, you may need to make some upgrades if your machine cannot meet the following requirements:

- the machine must be fitted with a second water separator
- the machine must be fitted with interlocks on the cage, button trap, lint filter and still doors that stop the machine from working if any of these doors are left open, and
- the machine must automatically shut down in cases of: cooling water shortage, still condenser failure, refrigeration system failure and dryer heater failure.

Know where to get more information.

The government guidance for drycleaners is available from the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) web site:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/lapc/pgnotes/default.htm>

Ultimately, if you are not sure what to do, ask your Environmental Health Officer or a specialist consultant for help.

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