



**Tuesday 1st of October 2019 | Posted In: Generate, Generating energy, Use and Manage**

## **MCPD environmental permits: all you need to know**

The Medium Combustion Plant Directive (MCPD) came into effect towards the end of last year. It's the scheme aimed at improving air quality by controlling the emission of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides (NOx), and dust pollutants, so reducing the potential risks to health and the environment. To comply, combustion plants and generators rated at greater than 1 MWth and less than 50 MWth capacity (based on the fuel input) must have an environmental permit. If you are installing new plant in the 1 MWth to 50 MWth range, you should get your permit application underway in good time as you must comply with the regulations from the outset.

### **GETTING A PERMIT**

Permits are issued by the Environment Agency and it takes about 12 weeks from application to getting the draft permit back from them for review. The focus on emissions and environmental impact mean that the application process takes into account everything in your plant's local area. If you're lucky and you're in a fairly isolated rural area with little of environmental concern and low hours of operation, then your permit application could fall under the 'Standard Rule' category and be simple, straightforward and low cost. Factors that could push you into a bespoke permit include the proximity of residential areas or other "receptors" and the nature of your local landscape. For example, being located in or close to a Site of Special Scientific Interest or other type of conservation area. This may require things like air dispersion modelling or a habitat screen assessment to quantify your impact on the local environment. Bespoke permits are more complex, require more detail and involve higher application costs.

### **COMPLYING WITH THE TERMS OF YOUR PERMIT**

Once you've got your permit you then need to ensure you comply with its terms. You'll need to carry out any necessary testing within 4 months of its issue date to prove your emissions are within the limit specified in your permit plus have an environmental management system in place to record ongoing testing and everything of relevance that happens on your site.

#### WHAT ABOUT EXISTING PLANT?

If you are operating plant commissioned before the regulations came into force, you may have more time to get your permit in place as the date by which a permit is required for existing 'specified generators' varies according to plant type, size and age.

Whilst 'specified generators' with existing Capacity Market contracts have already had to comply, the latest permit deadline under this transitional arrangement is 01 October 2019. You must have your environmental permit in place by then if your plant:

- Has greater than 5 MWth up to 50 MWth capacity
- Started operating before 1 December 2016 or has a Capacity Market agreement older than 2024/15 and
- Has NOx emissions above 500 mg/Nm<sup>3</sup> (STP, 15% O<sub>2</sub>) and operates for more than 50 hours a year

Those with lower NOx emissions have until 1 January 2025 to get their permit and those in the 1 MWth to 5 MWth range until 1 January 2030.

#### GETTING HELP WITH MCPD

Over the last 12 months, we've gained a lot of experience guiding farmers and growers through the complexity of the MCPD permitting process and can help you understand the scheme, make your initial permit application and manage your ongoing compliance. Call the team on 024 7669 6512 if you have any questions or need help with your application.