

[REDACTED]  
Freedom of Information Officer  
[foi@environmentalstandards.scot](mailto:foi@environmentalstandards.scot)  
0808 1964000

[REDACTED]  
  
01/05/2025

Dear [REDACTED]

**Information request – partial disclosure**

I am writing in response to your email of 3 April 2025. The information you requested is as follows:

1. The ESS report into sewage overflows published in September 2024 mentions that Scottish Water and SEPA have identified 12 overflows at risk of spilling in dry weather, could you please provide a list of those overflows with licence numbers and asset IDs?
2. If additional overflows have been identified as being at risk of spilling in dry weather, please include these as well.

As the information you have requested is ‘environmental information’ for the purposes of the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIRs), we are required to deal with your request under those Regulations. We are applying the exemption at section 39(2) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA), so that we do not also have to deal with your request under FOISA.

This exemption is subject to the public interest test. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on

**Environmental Standards Scotland Enquiries**

[enquiries@environmentalstandards.scot](mailto:enquiries@environmentalstandards.scot)

Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5HD  
0808 1964000

balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption as there is no public interest in dealing with the same request under two different regimes. This is essentially a technical point and has no material effect on the outcome of your request.

Please find our response to your request below. Some of the information you asked for cannot be provided because Environmental Standards Scotland does not hold it. Further information is provided below.

## Response

### 1. List of overflows with licence numbers and asset IDs

At the time of writing our [storm overflows in Scotland report](#), Scottish Water and SEPA had identified 12 storm overflows which were at risk of operating in dry weather. We have extracted the relevant information and included in Table 1 below. At the time of ESS accessing this data (18 May 2023) this list was publicly available on the Scottish Water website, but this link is no longer active.

**Table 1:** List of Combined Sewage Overflows (CSO's) identified by Scottish Water and SEPA as being at risk of spilling in dry weather.

	Asset name	Marked as 'High priority as asset appears to operate in dry weather'
1	2 Kirkford / Kirkford Bridge CSO	Y
2	78 High Street CSO	Y
3	Bo'Ness, Grangepans WwPS CSO	Y
4	Corbiehall WwPS CSO	Y
5	Cramond, Cramond WwPS CSO	Y
6	Cramond, Glebe Road CSO	Y
7	Dalgety Bay, St Bridgets Brae CSO	Y

## Environmental Standards Scotland Enquiries

[enquiries@environmentalstandards.scot](mailto:enquiries@environmentalstandards.scot)

Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5HD  
0808 1964000

8	David Dale Avenue CSO	Y
9	Dysart Road (Ravensraig) CSO	Y
10	Grangemouth, Glensburgh WwPS CSO	Y
11	Polmont, North side of M9 CSO	Y
12	Polmont, South side of M9 CSO	Y

Although broader than the scope of your request, we would also provide the following further information that we have since been provided by Scottish Water:

- Scottish Water have advised that these CSOs had been identified during site observations and that follow up project work will be completed by the end of 2027
- Scottish Water advise these CSOs are 'at risk' of spilling in dry weather. This is because they had been witnessed on at least one of the three visits required under the 'Methodology for Aesthetic surveys' as spilling in dry weather. The reason for the spills might have been a temporary or operational issue such as a collapse or blockage rather than routine hydraulic overloading issues. Therefore, they had categorised the CSO with a 'Spills in dry weather' driver, however that does not mean that they expected these assets to frequently or continuously spill in dry weather

## **2. Additional overflows identified as being at risk of spilling in dry weather**

ESS' analysis examined the potential for dry weather spills. This analysis was not intended to identify definitively all instances of dry weather spilling and there were limitations on ESS' ability to determine accurately the scale and significance of the issue. These included:

- the data available related to a very limited number of CSOs and settled storm sewage overflows (SSSOs). These were likely to be a biased subset (as monitors are more likely to be fitted on high throughput systems, or those near areas where overflows

### **Environmental Standards Scotland Enquiries**

[enquiries@environmentalstandards.scot](mailto:enquiries@environmentalstandards.scot)

Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5HD  
0808 1964000

are likely to have high environmental or health impacts). Even for these storm overflows, data was not always available for the complete year

- there were challenges in identifying dry weather spills, for example due to a lag in water from a hilltop or outflow reaching a treatment plant or overflow, or due to the length of a river catchment. There is no recognised approach to defining a dry weather spill. Scottish Water currently identifies these through modelling or through investigation of pollution incidents

Given the points above, ESS suggested in its report that the 12 CSOs identified by Scottish Water and SEPA were likely to be an underestimate. However, the available data did not allow us to identify comprehensively the scale of the issue. As an illustration of this, the CSO at the Ardnadam sewage pumping station in Dunoon was not one of the 12 overflows identified by Scottish Water and SEPA. In 2023, it spilled 207 times for a total duration of 187 days over 277 individual days. Scottish Water publishes [data on overflow events](#) on its website. There is no information on the weather conditions associated with the overflow data. ESS examined [Met Office data](#) for the local area and linked this to the dates of the spills. This indicated that, in 2023, 31 of Ardnadam CSO's spills occurred on days where there had been less than 0.25 mm of rain on the day of the spill and the preceding day.

ESS' report recommended that "Scottish Water and SEPA should more routinely assess available rainfall, flow and spill event data to identify all instances of overflows which appear to spill in dry weather and prioritise these for investigation and improvement as soon as possible."

[SEPA's response](#) to this recommendation noted that it had identified 60 catchments in which it requires Scottish Water to undertake studies and had identified a small number of CSOs which spill in dry weather. SEPA has committed to developing an analytical tool to look at the relationship between rainfall and spill data to identify patterns and trends. However, it states that due to the complexity of the relationship the tool cannot yet identify specific sites. SEPA has committed to providing ESS with a more detailed outline of its work by 1 September 2025.

**Environmental Standards Scotland Enquiries**

[enquiries@environmentalstandards.scot](mailto:enquiries@environmentalstandards.scot)

Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5HD  
0808 1964000

[Scottish Water's response](#) to this recommendation stated that: "Scottish Water agrees that overflows should not normally operate during dry weather and that there should be sufficient hydraulic capacity within the system to ensure dry weather flow can be properly contained, conveyed and treated. Where discharges have been observed during dry weather periods, these have been [prioritised](#) for further investigation and improvement and we would envisage that this will continue. We will work with SEPA to develop the definition of dry weather operation for overflows, recognising the complexity of catchment response to rainfall events."

### **Information not held by ESS**

ESS does not hold the following information you have asked for:

- licence numbers and asset IDs

Accordingly, we are applying the exception in regulation 10(4)(a) (information not held) of the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (the EIRs) to your request.

As with all of the exceptions in the EIRs, this exception is subject to the public interest test in regulation 10(1)(b) of the EIRs. Taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exception. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exception. While we recognise that there may be some public interest in information about these licence numbers and asset IDs, we cannot provide information which we do not hold.

This information is likely to be held by Scottish Water (who I understand you may already have approached) and/or the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

### **Environmental Standards Scotland Enquiries**

[enquiries@environmentalstandards.scot](mailto:enquiries@environmentalstandards.scot)

Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5HD  
0808 1964000

## Right to seek a review

If you are unhappy with this response to your request under the EIRs, you may ask us to carry out an internal review of the response by writing to:

Chief Executive Officer  
Environmental Standards Scotland  
Thistle House  
91 Haymarket Terrace Edinburgh  
EH12 5HD  
Email [foi@environmentalstandards.scot](mailto:foi@environmentalstandards.scot)

Your review request should explain why you are dissatisfied with this response and should be made within 40 working days from the date when you received this letter. We will complete the review and inform you of the decision within 20 working days from the date when we receive your review request.

If you are not satisfied with the result of the review, you then have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner. More detailed information on your appeal rights is available on the Commissioner's website at: <https://www.foi.scot/appeal>

Yours sincerely

  


Freedom of Information Officer  
Environmental Standards Scotland

## Environmental Standards Scotland Enquiries

[enquiries@environmentalstandards.scot](mailto:enquiries@environmentalstandards.scot)

Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5HD  
0808 1964000