



Industry guide

Effective date: not yet authorised

Wet commissioning under a works approval

Where a works approval permits construction and wet commissioning, emission limits and targets during the commissioning need to be set as conditions in the works approval.

Where commissioning limits and targets are not set as conditions within the works approval, an amendment to allow wet commissioning and to set wet commissioning limits and targets, will be considered on receipt of a satisfactory commissioning plan that includes emissions and discharges management.

Background and legal framework

The *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (the Act) enables commissioning to occur under a works approval. This Industry guide provides standard procedures to enable wet commissioning under a works approval and management of emissions and discharges during commissioning of work on, or in relation to, premises which causes the premises to become, or become capable of being a prescribed premises. The guide does not apply to work on existing prescribed premises that requires a works approval.

It is an offence to cause emissions from a prescribed premises without a licence unless under a works approval. Conditions regulating emissions and requiring compliance with management plans can be included in a works approval. This enables commissioning to occur under a works approval that controls the processes of commissioning and emissions during commissioning. Under the provisions of sections 62 and 62(A) of the Act, conditions attached to a works approval can regulate commissioning processes, emissions, monitoring and reporting.

Wet commissioning

“Wet Commissioning” means operation of equipment for the first time post construction for the purposes of trialing or testing performance that involves storage, processing or treatment of process materials and/or the discharge of waste.

Emission standards and procedures associated with an industry process or pollution control equipment may not be known at the commencement of an operation, nor prior to construction of works.

For a works approval holder seeking seamless transition from wet commissioning (under a works approval) to full operation under a licence, technical data may be required from monitoring of operations during commissioning.

The applicant, seeking a works approval that permits both construction and wet commissioning, needs to provide a commissioning plan at the time of the initial application for the works approval. An applicant that is for any reason unable or unwilling to provide a commissioning plan at the time of the application for the works approval may later apply to wet commission the works under an amended works approval. At that time, a commissioning plan needs to be provided with the request to amend the works approval, and the commissioning plan must be acceptable to the CEO before an amendment is made.

Commissioning under a works approval

- (i) A works approval can be granted for construction, commissioning and operating under the works approval, where a satisfactory commissioning plan is provided at the time of the application for a works approval, *or*
- (ii) Where a satisfactory commissioning plan is not submitted at the time of the application, a works approval can only be granted for construction. Following submission of a commissioning plan satisfying the CEO's requirements, an amended works approval can be issued to permit wet commissioning.

Conditions for commissioning under a works approval

Conditions of commissioning are to ensure wet commissioning occurs in a manner specified in a commissioning plan, and within imposed limits and targets. Where wet commissioning is to occur under a works approval, it is to be conditioned by specified limits and targets except where otherwise specifically determined by DEC. Limits and targets of a works approval may be less rigorous than the limits and targets required in a licence, however the wet commissioning limits must be set at or below an environmentally acceptable level. Limits and targets may differ for different phases of wet commissioning.

The commissioning plan needs to include wet commissioning and monitoring protocols, and the conditions will specify emission limits and targets and management responses to exceedence of targets.

A condition will require a report to the CEO on:

- (i) the physical works as constructed; and
- (ii) the monitoring data obtained during wet commissioning.

Monitoring data is to cover the period until normal operating conditions (NOC) are established. The premises may continue to operate under the works approval after the submission of the commissioning report provided its continuing operation complies with the works approval target and limit conditions and it is within the period of the works approval.

Conditions on the works approval

To permit wet commissioning, conditions set in a works approval are to require:

- setting of limits and targets
- monitoring of emissions and discharges during wet commissioning
- reporting on:
 - emissions and discharges, including exceedences
 - management responses to exceedences
 - effect of management responses on emissions and discharges

The setting of limits and targets in conditions for wet commissioning will enable the monitoring report to be audited against those limits and targets.

The content of reports, level of authorisation, and any certification requirements are to be specified as part of the works approval commissioning conditions.

Use of commissioning reports

As provided by sections 57(3)(b)(i) and 57(3)(b)(ii) of the Act the Chief Executive Officer must decline to deal with an application for a licence unless he is satisfied that the applicant has complied with works approval conditions. Section 57 provides further requirements in respect of satisfactory completion of works.

Where wet commissioning has occurred as part of a works approval, and a licence will subsequently be required, the works compliance report and the commissioning compliance report

provide the basis for the CEO determining that the requirements of s57(3)(b)(i) and s57(3)(b)(ii) are met.

During or as a result of wet commissioning under a works approval, no decisions are implied in regard to discharge limits that will apply under any subsequent licence. Consideration of emissions and discharges and decisions on what is to be permitted under a licence, are not made until a licence application is received.

Implementation

1. Where construction and wet commissioning occur in a single phase, a satisfactory commissioning plan is required to be part of the application.

2. Where wet commissioning is not part of the works approval application, the works approval is only for construction. Under these circumstances, where wet commissioning is required, an acceptable commissioning plan needs to be submitted to DEC prior to commissioning, and wet commissioning is not to occur until:

- the commissioning plan is assessed as satisfactory
- the works approval is amended to include a condition that wet commissioning is to occur in accordance with the commissioning plan.

MANAGER POLICY AND PROCESS

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