

# Independently classify water-polluting chemical substances

If you or your company operate a facility in which chemical substances hazardous to water are handled, you must independently classify the substances used into a water hazard class (WGK) and notify the Federal Environment Agency.

## Competent Department

- [Umweltbundesamt - Fachgebiet IV 2.6 Wassergefährdende Stoffe](#)

## Basic information

If you or your company operate a facility in which chemical substances hazardous to water are handled, you are obliged to independently assess all chemical substances that you use in your facilities and to

- into one of the water hazard classes (WGK)
- or as not hazardous to water.

You must then document this classification and submit it to the Federal Environment Agency (UBA).

Chemical substances can be a hazard to water bodies. They must therefore be classified in water hazard classes according to their hazardousness:

- WGK 1: slightly hazardous to water (for example acetic acid, caustic soda, alcohol or hydrogen peroxide)
- WGK 2: clearly hazardous to water (e.g. heating oil, sodium hypochlorite, iodine)
- WGK 3: highly hazardous to water (e.g. waste oil, chlorinated hydrocarbons, benzene)

In addition, substances can also be classified as

- nwg: not hazardous to water, and
- awg: generally hazardous to water (e.g. liquid manure, fermentation substrates or certain solid mixtures such as waste)

classified.

You are exempt from this obligation if

- you use chemical substances whose hazardousness has already been assessed and the corresponding classification has been published in the Federal Gazette or
- you consider the chemical substances to be highly hazardous to water (WGK 3) regardless of their hazardousness or
- you use chemical substances whose classification as not hazardous to water or as generally hazardous to water is already specified by the Ordinance on Installations for Handling Substances Hazardous to Water (e.g. foodstuffs or liquid manure, slurry and silage).

If you later have scientific findings that lead to a change in the published classification, you are obliged to document this immediately in writing to the Federal Environment Agency.

Note: Division IV 2.6 "Substances hazardous to water" at the Federal Environment Agency is responsible for the classification of substances in water hazard classes (WGK).

## Requirements

Your company operates a facility in which chemical substances or groups of substances are used or stored.

## What documents do I need?

- Chemically unique substance name
- International CAS number or European EC number for chemical substances
- Hazard warnings
- Documentation of test results

## Procedure

You can submit the classification into water hazard classes using the online form or alternatively by e-mail or post.

Note: Before you classify and document a new chemical substance, please check the Rigoletto substance database of the Federal Environment Agency to see whether the substance has already been published with a classification (individually or through a group classification).

Submit classification online:

- Go to the website of the federal portal [verwaltung.bund.de](http://verwaltung.bund.de) and fill in the documentation form electronically.
  - Note: You will need an electronic ID document for the online application, for example the online function of your ID card.
- Upload all the required documents and send the classification documentation.
- The Federal Environment Agency will check whether your classification documentation is complete and plausible. Freely available substance information is also used for this purpose. In addition, the Federal Environment Agency may take

random samples from the documentation, for which you must submit the classification bases and test reports.

- If questions arise during the assessment that cannot be answered from the documents, the Federal Environment Agency will contact you. If necessary, a written hearing will be held to clarify the facts of the case.
- The Federal Environment Agency will make the final classification decision. It will send you the decision in writing by post and by e-mail.
- The Federal Environment Agency publishes the legally binding classification in the Federal Gazette and in the online database Rigoletto.

Alternatively, you can submit the classification by e-mail or post:

- Go to the website of the Federal Environment Agency or access the online database Rigoletto. Download the "Documentation form 1".
- You can fill out the documentation form directly on your computer or print it out and edit it by hand.
- Sign the documentation form and send it to the Federal Environment Agency either by e-mail or by post.
- The remaining steps are the same as for the online procedure.

## Legal bases

- [§ 4 Verordnung über Anlagen zum Umgang mit wassergefährdenden Stoffen \(AwSV\)](#)

## More information

Objection: Detailed information on how to lodge an objection can be found in the notification.

## What deadlines must be paid attention to?

You do not have to observe any deadlines for submitting the classification documentation. If you have any questions, you will be given a period of 2 to 4 weeks to respond during the hearing procedure.

## How long does it take to process

The processing of your classification documentation takes about 3 months until the decision is issued. However, if a hearing is held during the classification process, this period may be extended.

## What are the costs?

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