

3. STATUTORY DUTIES AND POWERS

Under the Water Resources Act 1991, the Environment Agency has wide ranging duties and powers. Broadly these are to protect water resources, prevent pollution, erect flood defences and ensure the conservation of the natural beauty and amenity of inland and coastal waters. In order to implement these functions, water chemists employed by the Environment Agency have the power to enter land, take samples, readings and measurements, compile reports and, in certain instances, bring prosecutions on the basis of their findings.

Persons undertaking similar functions but who are, for example, employed by an environmental consultancy or an industrial company will face similar problems but without any of the statutory protection available to the Agency and its employees. This briefing sets out below some of the problems facing water chemists, be they regulators, employees, consultants or analysts.