

Guidance Note - Water Extraction Licences in Taiwan

An independent review was conducted through the UK Trade and Investment Office in UK/ Taiwan to investigate the situation relating to water abstraction permits in Taiwan (Report 25 May 2011). There are two types of water abstraction permit: one for agricultural use and one industrial use. This comment only applies to tanneries who are long established and either:

1. use an agricultural permit or:
2. don't have a permit.

The apparent history behind this situation is that the Taiwan government (from 1972 onwards) was keen to establish factories in the country areas and associated tanneries, somewhat loosely, with the agricultural sector. Long established tanneries in the countryside areas are still governed by this concept. Recently the Taiwan government appears to have switched their focus to waste water permits and the system for water abstraction, while notionally still in place, is not uniformly applied. This means some tanneries (in the countryside) have difficulty showing valid water abstraction permits. As the government has switched the focus to water discharge permits, any tannery with an agricultural permit or no water abstraction permit, but who holds a valid water discharge permit, appears (through custom and practise) not to be required to demonstrate a valid water extraction permit, ie the water discharge permit will be accepted as the current legal requirement.

This is a grey area, and in the event that the Taiwan government reviewed this policy then it is possible that some leather manufacturers could potentially become in violation of Taiwan regulations. At this time there is no indication that the government is likely to change its policy.

The above factors being taken into consideration the LWG has accepted that a valid waste water discharge permit in rural areas appears to be considered (through custom and practice) all that is required by local authorities for water extraction and disposal.