BCAS

Oil-water separators

Helping you meet your carbon reduction commitments

Scope 3

Oil-water separators

Lawful disposal of compressor condensate

Water Resources Act 1991

Helping you meet your environmental compliance responsibilities

The Water Resources Act 1991

Compressed air systems inevitably produce oily condensate. Even traces of oil in the wastewater system can cause widespread pollution and significant environmental damage.

This risk is reflected in legislation introduced by the Water Resources Act 1991. The bill strictly prohibits the discharge of noxious waste or polluting material into the water cycle. Compressor condensate is classified as hazardous waste and therefore must be disposed of responsibly ie. either collected by a licensed waste removal company or treated at source prior to disposal.

Failure to comply with the Water Resources Act carries a maximum fine of £20,000.

Waste disposal can be expensive as it is charged by volume

In-house treatment and disposal

Unfortunately, waste disposed can be expensive as it is charged by volume.

By installing an oil-water separator (OWS) however, it is possible to remove residual oil from your compressor condensate, allowing you to safely discharge the cleaned waste into a sewage drain on site.

There are various techniques that are used to separate the oil from the water in compressed air condensate including adsorption, absorption, and gravitational and mechanical separation. But whichever method is used, oil-water separators keep you compliant with UK regulations and protect you from legal risk.

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Oil-water separators

The benefits to your business

In addition to legislative compliance, there are numerous other advantages of installing an OWS:

Convenience

Oil-water separators are simple to install and easy to maintain. By treating condensate on site, you also reduce your reliance on external waste collection providers and avoid the administrative burden of arranging regular pickups. This gives you greater control, reliability, and operational flexibility.

Cost reduction

Because condensate is around 95% water, treating it on site avoids paying hazardous waste charges on unnecessary volume. Separators also protect drains, pipework, and downstream equipment from oil related damage, reducing repair costs and extending system life. Ensuring you are legally compliant also protects you from costly enforcement action and reputational damage.

Environment

Even small quantities of oil can contaminate large volumes of water, harming aquatic life, damaging vegetation, and causing long lasting environmental impact.

Treating condensate in house is a more sustainable and energy efficient approach than transporting hazardous waste off site. Oil-water separation is not only a legal requirement—it is the right thing to do for the environment. And removing the need for waste collections can reduce your Scope 2 carbon emissions.

BCAS

Oil-water separators

Responsible compressed air design and management

A smart investment in the future of your site

Not an optional add-on

Oil-water separators allow you to dispose of compressor condensate safely, legally, and cheaply by removing oil on site so only clean water goes to drain.

For any business using oil lubricated compressors, installing an OWS is a practical, cost- effective step that delivers long term operational, financial, and environmental value: a smart investment in the future of your site, your equipment, and the environment.

But it's important to remember that oil-water separators are not simply an optional add-on. They are a core part of responsible compressed air design and management.

BCAS supplies a wide range of oil-water separators and can advise on the best option for your particular compressed air set-up.

To find out more about how on-site oil-water separation can help your business, contact BCAS:

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