

Appeal to catch Devon asbestos dumpers

Press release

The Environment Agency has launched an appeal to catch the people who dumped asbestos in a Devon watercourse.



The asbestos was left in a Mill Leat in Sowton Village, Devon

Two builders' bags full of asbestos sheets were found in the Mill Leat, on the River Clyst, near Sowton Village, East Devon. It is thought the illegal dumping happened on or near 20 November 2020.

Fly-tipping is not a victimless crime. The cost of clearing up falls on the landowner. But in limited circumstances the Environment Agency can step in. The asbestos is now being removed and disposed of safely.

Dave Brogden of the Environment Agency said:

The burden of investigating and clearing waste from fly-tipping often falls on local councils and we get involved if the amount and type of waste is so bad it can only be classified as illegal dumping.

On this occasion we have stepped in to sort out this problem, the result of someone showing a complete disregard to the safety of the public and the environment and for the time and resources of local services such as ours, which are already under extreme pressure.

Everyone who produces waste has a duty of care to make sure it does not cause harm to human health or pollute the environment and that it goes to the right place for disposal. On this occasion there were at least three sites within a few miles of the location permitted to accept this sort of hazardous waste.

If the cost of any work being carried out is unusually low, the contractor may not have a permit to carry waste nor any intention of paying for its

proper disposal. You can check their waste-carrying credentials at <https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers>.

Dave Brogden said:

If you use someone to take away waste, we want you to take 3 steps: check if they have a permit, ask where the rubbish will end up, then record the details of the vehicle used to take the rubbish away. Never pay cash and insist upon a receipt.

If you have any information about who is responsible for this waste crime, contact the Environment Agency's 24/7 hotline 0800 807060 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555111 or www.crimestoppers-uk.org.

Published 8 December 2020