

Detailed guide: Preventing agricultural pollution in exceptional weather

You can cause soil damage and water pollution if you spread slurry or milk during exceptional weather or on unfavourable soil.

You must [contact the Environment Agency](#) if:

- your slurry or milk store is at risk of over flowing or leaking
- you cannot avoid spreading slurry or milk on agricultural land and there is a risk of slurry runoff, run-through to land drains or leaching
- you are at risk of breaching the legal requirements of:
 - [nitrate vulnerable zones](#)
 - [storing silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil \(SSAF0\) rules](#)
 - [rules for farmers and land managers to prevent water pollution](#)

You can only spread milk to land if you have a [U10 waste exemption](#).

Definition of exceptional weather

Exceptional weather is weather that is not common, usual or reasonably expected. For example, the long exceptionally dry periods during the summers of 1976 and 2018.

It does not apply to weather that can be planned for. For example, wetter than average winter rainfall.

Contingency plan

You must have a contingency plan to avoid causing pollution during exceptional weather.

You must make sure that all your staff and contractors are aware of your contingency plan. It should include field inspections to consider the risk of slurry or milk getting into surface water or groundwater.

Work with neighbouring farms to create your contingency plan if possible.

Use the following hierarchy of options to make your contingency plan. 1 is the most favourable and 5 is the least favourable:

1. Store the slurry or milk at the place of production.
2. Store the slurry or milk at the place of use.
3. Dispose of the slurry or milk at an off-site anaerobic digestion plant or other effluent treatment plant, including at a sewage treatment works – milk can only go to permitted anaerobic digestion sites.
4. Store the slurry or milk off site.

5. Spread the slurry or milk on low run-off risk land.

Reducing the amount of slurry you produce

During exceptional weather you should reduce the amount of slurry (including lightly fouled water) you produce. You should:

- wash dairy parlours down with a low volume hose system (0.6 cubic metres per cow per month or 20 litres per cow per day)
- remove excess dung with a brush or squeegee before hosing down to reduce the amount of wash water you need to use
- keep animals on straw to produce solid manure rather than slurry
- divert uncontaminated surface water away from dirty yards
- keep or move livestock onto the smallest yard area necessary
- install, maintain or repair gutters and downpipes, especially on roofs that drain onto dirty yards
- consider covering exposed fouled yard areas

Temporary slurry storage

You must normally comply with [SSAFO rules](#) to store slurry.

However, the Environment Agency will waive the full SSAFO requirements if you want to store slurry for less than 12 months. You must only consider temporary storage where existing facilities are inadequate.

Temporary storage could include:

- reinstating disused stores
- reclaiming tanks
- new tanks
- earth bank lagoons
- lined lagoons
- slurry bags

To keep slurry in a temporary store you must:

- check planning requirements with your local planning authority
- [contact the Environment Agency](#) before construction
- agree each individual location with the Environment Agency
- install tanks, liners and slurry bags to manufacturer's instructions
- make sure the base of earth bank lagoons is above the water table – there should be at least one metre of clay subsoil beneath the proposed base
- use a trial pit to confirm the depth of the clay layer – the resulting hole must be backfilled and puddled in
- use liners where there is doubt about soil permeability – lower grade liners should suffice for temporary storage but use high grade liners in high risk areas
- monitor it to make sure there are no leaks
- locate it at least 10 metres from watercourses and land drains – use temporary trial trenches if you're unsure about the presence of land

drains

- locate it at least 50 metres from groundwater sources
- de-commission it as soon as it's no longer needed

If you're using shared facilities you must:

- consider any biosecurity risks
- agree management arrangements
- agree where responsibility lies

For more information about storing slurry see [CIRIA: Livestock manure and silage storage infrastructure for agriculture](#).

How to spread slurry or milk

You must spread slurry or milk:

- thinly and widely
- at an application rate not exceeding 20 m³ per hectare – you must use a lower application rate if run-off could enter surface water

You must only spread slurry or milk on land with low run-off risk.

Low run-off risk land:

- has an average slope of less than 3 degrees
- does not have land drains other than sealed impermeable pipes
- has not been pipe drained, mole drained or sub-soiled in the last 12 months
- does not have a shallow soil less than 30cm above fissured rock
- has a sufficient depth and suitable type of soil above groundwater to prevent pollution
- is not within a designated groundwater source protection zone 1
- is at least 50 metres from surface water or a conduit leading to surface water
- is at least 50 metres from springs, wells and boreholes where groundwater is used for human consumption
- does not have compacted soil or a soil surface which is capped – you can only spread where the soil is permeable and has a good structure
- does not have cracked soil above a land drainage system or groundwater

If you mix slurry with milk you increase the risk of lethal or explosive gases such as methane, carbon dioxide, ammonia and hydrogen sulphide.

When the Environment Agency may not take enforcement action

When exceptional weather stops you being able to comply with legislation and guidance, spreading to land may be your only viable option. If you spread slurry and milk during exceptional weather without causing pollution, the Environment Agency may decide not to take enforcement action.

You must:

- [contact the Environment Agency](#) before you spread any slurry or milk to land
- agree with them that spreading is the only option available
- only spread the amount of slurry and milk you need to reduce the risk of pollution
- carry out spreading at a rate of $\leq 20\text{m}^3$ per hectare and on the lowest risk land available – you may be able to export the slurry and milk to neighbouring farms
- carry out regular checks before, during and after spreading to ensure there is no pollution taking place

You are still responsible for any pollution that you cause.

When to check back

This guidance will be reviewed by 31 October 2018. You will need to check back then to see if it still applies.

Contact the Environment Agency

General enquiries

National Customer Contact Centre
PO Box 544
Rotherham
S60 1BY

Email
enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Telephone
03708 506 506

Telephone from outside the UK (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm GMT)
+44 (0) 114 282 5312

Minicom (for the hard of hearing)
03702 422 549

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Call the environment incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 out of hours or in an emergency.

[News story: Minister for Africa visits Sudan to strengthen UK's commitment to long-term future growth](#)

The UK's Minister for Africa, Harriett Baldwin, has visited Sudan to strengthen the UK's partnership with the country and to reiterate the UK's commitment to helping Sudan become a more stable and prosperous nation.

During her visit, the Minister announced a new package of lifesaving UK aid which will provide essential supplies for 700,000 vulnerable Sudanese people facing food shortages, and provide food and education support for 40,000 refugees seeking safety from violence in neighbouring South Sudan.

During her meetings with Government of Sudan Ministers, she discussed the importance of government efforts to improve human rights and introduce political reforms.

The Minister also visited Darfur to underline the UK's continued support to the UN/AU Mission (UNAMID) and saw the Mission's contribution towards finding a peaceful end to conflict in the area.

Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin said:

Sudan's stability and prosperity matter for the UK. I'm pleased to have seen how the UK can share its expertise to help Sudan achieve economic reform and build a pathway to future growth, as well make progress on political freedoms and human rights.

It's been excellent to speak with beneficiaries of our aid programmes in Darfur to see how the UK can partner with Sudan to open up new opportunities to build a brighter, more peaceful future which benefits both our countries.

During her visit, Ms Baldwin also met Chevening Scholars who will have the opportunity to study in the UK and return home to join over 200 other Chevening alumni who are already contributing their expertise to Sudan.

Press release: Vulnerable offenders steered towards treatment

- studies have indicated the effectiveness of 'Community Sentence Treatment Requirements' in cutting reoffending
- scheme to be assessed ahead of potential wider rollout in England

Vulnerable offenders with mental health, alcohol and substance abuse issues are addressing the underlying cause of their offending, as part of a pioneering scheme announced by Justice Secretary David Gauke today (10 August 2018).

In 5 pilot areas, justice and health services have signed up to a new protocol that will help to divert relevant offenders away from frequently ineffective short-term custodial sentences and towards treatment that aims to tackle the root cause of their criminality.

Psychologists will be present in courts to assess offenders whose crime makes them eligible for a Community Order. Local panels comprising justice and health officials also ensure that Magistrates and Judges have the additional information they need to determine whether the offender should be required to receive treatment for their mental health, alcohol or drug issues.

The protocol dictates a new minimum standard of service and additional training has been provided to staff in the pilot areas to improve collaboration between the agencies involved.

This has increased confidence among sentencers – resulting in more 'Community Sentence Treatment Requirements' (CSTRs) being issued as part of sentencing in those areas. When used, CSTRs require engagement with local health services under the terms of the sentence. Failure to attend could represent a breach of that sentence.

The initiative brings together the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and Public Health England to improve access to treatment programmes for offenders serving community sentences.

Research shows that around 29% of offenders who start Community Orders self-report having mental health problems and of those who are formally assessed, 32% were identified as having a drug misuse need and 38% an alcohol misuse problem.

A 2017 joint report by MOJ and Public Health England looked at the association between community-based drug and alcohol treatments and reoffending behaviour. The report showed that:

- among those that committed an offence in the two years before undergoing drug or alcohol treatment, there was a 33% reduction in the number of offences they committed in the subsequent 2 years
- the reduction for those engaging in alcohol treatment was especially

striking, at 59%

A recently published study from MOJ found that when offenders were handed mental health treatment requirements as part of their sentence, they were significantly less likely to reoffend compared with similar cases where this was not the case. Despite this, the use of treatment requirements as part of community sentences remains very low.

Since the pilot sites went live at various points in late 2017 and early 2018 – in Birmingham, Plymouth, Sefton, Milton Keynes and Northampton – initial figures suggest that over 400 CSTRs have been given.

That means fewer short-term custodial sentences which are known to frequently be ineffective at turning vulnerable offenders away from crime. Adults released from custodial sentences of less than 12 months have a proven reoffending rate of 64.9%.

Secretary of State David Gauke said:

I am delighted to announce these sites in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and Public Health England. We are all clear that we need to do more to support vulnerable offenders in the community.

I want to improve confidence in community sentences, and early evidence from these sites has shown that treatment requirements can have a significant impact in improving rehabilitation and addressing the underlying causes of offending.

We need to do more to raise awareness and increase confidence in treatment requirements and I look forward to exploring how these sites progress.

Minister for Mental Health and Inequalities, Jackie Doyle-Price, said:

All too often offenders are not able to access the support and treatment they need – this type of action could prove to be the turning point that helps to improve the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

We need to make sure services work together, not in silos, and this initiative is a vital step towards better information sharing and collaboration between health and justice agencies.

Once the results of the trial sites have been assessed, it is intended that the scheme will be rolled out more widely across England.

By putting treatment programmes at the core of community sentences, the project will enable increased use of these services, ultimately helping to

reduce reoffending and improve rehabilitation.

The programme sets out a new minimum standard of service, while there has also been additional training and improved collaboration between agencies. This includes a steering group at each site to ensure the smooth running of the diversion process.

District Judge Richard Clancy, lead Judge at the Complex Case Court in Merseyside, said:

To have a trial scheme where the court has on-site psychologists capable of testing suitability of a defendant for a mental health treatment requirement, so that such a community order can be made by the Judge on the same day without need for adjournment, is a remarkable and innovative move which I fully support. This is an excellent joint venture, and I have seen first-hand how this allows us to 'nip in the bud' one of the major causes of crime.

Kate Davies, Director of Health & Justice, Armed Forces and Sexual Assault Services Commissioning at NHS England, said:

It is vitally important that vulnerable offenders get appropriate and timely support which we know reduces the likelihood of reoffending. By improving access to services and treatments, trailblazers are already showing what can be done, addressing rehabilitation with individual and personalised approaches head on.

By evaluating the sites, the government will be able to understand the effectiveness of the programme along with the clinical services required to increase the use of treatment requirements. In turn, this will help to improve commissioning of future services by highlighting positive outcomes.

The programme aims to reduce the number of vulnerable people who receive short-term custodial sentences by boosting judicial confidence in alternatives to custody, while ultimately ensuring public safety.

Speech: Addressing Peacebuilding Efforts in Burundi

I thank the representative of Bolivia for his statement and I shall now make a statement in my capacity as a representative of the United Kingdom.

I'd like to thank our Special Envoy Kafando for his briefing and I also agree

with my Russian colleague on the value of the Peacebuilding Commission and on Ambassador Lauber's work. He's unfortunately on vacation, but it is really important that we bring all elements of the UN's abilities and capabilities to bear in these situations.

The Arusha Accords brought peace to Burundi after over a decade of civil war and hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths. It is crucial for the long-term stability of Burundi that the spirit and the letter of the Accords are preserved. We welcome President Nkurunziza's announcement that he will step down at the end of this term. It was an important step and an important message for the people of Burundi, the region and the international community. A genuine, inclusive dialogue with all parties remains the only viable option to resolve the political situation. And so as President Kafando has made clear, progress on the EAC-led Inter-Burundian dialogue remains crucial for the future peace and security of both Burundi and the region.

We echo your call for the parties to engage openly and constructively and call upon the region and sub-region to remain fully engaged to ensure swift progress is made over the coming months and weeks.

The human rights situation in Burundi is deeply concerning. The United Kingdom urges the government of Burundi to take steps to make swift progress to improve the situation so the country is better prepared to move towards elections in 2020. Firstly, the government should signal its commitment to upholding human rights by completing its negotiations on an MOU with the OHCHR to allow that organisation to operate effectively in the country. And secondly, the government should implement Human Rights Council Resolution 36.2, endorsed by the African Group of States – including Burundi – and adopted at the 36th session of the Human Rights Council in September 2017. And we urge the government to engage with OHCHR to facilitate the return of the three human rights experts whose visas were revoked in April.

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