

Press release: Plastic pollution could stop horse riders in their tracks

Plastic granulate, sold as an alternative surface for equestrian centres, could place Yorkshire's horses and riders at risk, present a pollution hazard and lead to owners falling foul of the law.

Plastic granulate is a waste material derived from the recycling of cable sheathing and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE). It's being marketed by some waste producers and brokers as a base material for horse maneges and track surfaces. However, there is no legal route available for its use for this purpose except in accordance with an Environmental Permit.

Furthermore, the plastics contained within this material can contain Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP's), phthalates and lead stearate. Weathering can cause leaching of these toxic substances into the wider environment, potentially causing contamination to land and groundwater. Some plastic granulate may even be cross-contaminated with non-plastic elements such as metal fragments and glass, making surfaces where it's used potentially harmful for horses and riders.

Environment Agency officer, Greg Deakin said:

We're determined to eliminate avoidable waste and crack down on plastics as part of the government's 25-year environmental plan.

We're therefore urging those with equestrian facilities to carefully consider the use of this material. It might be offered free of charge or for a small delivery fee, but it is an offence under the Environmental Permitting Regulations to use this waste without appropriate environmental controls.

If you're found to have plastic granulate waste deposited on your land without the appropriate Environmental Permit awarded by the Environment Agency, you could be fined and be liable for the cost of its disposal.

Producers or brokers of plastic granulate have a legal duty of care to ensure plastic granulate is disposed of at a permitted facility. If you are approached and offered this material and you do not have an appropriate Environmental Permit, please let us know on 03708 506 506 and ask to speak to your local waste team. Alternatively you can email the details to enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk.

If you are aware of any deposit of this waste please report it, anonymously if you prefer, to our 24-hour National Incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

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[News story: The armed forces pay tribute to those who fought at the Battle of Amiens a century ago](#)

The Battle of Amiens was a major engagement in the First World War. The battle heralded the Hundred Days Offensive, a string of allied successes on the Western Front which led to the signing of the armistice on 11 November 1918.

More than 19,000 allied soldiers were killed or injured in the 3 day battle as the First World War approached its final chapter.

The commemorative event at Amiens Cathedral was attended by Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, the Prime Minister, Theresa May, Minister for the Armed Forces Mark Lancaster and Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Nick Carter. The event featured a Guard of Honour by The Royal Anglian Regiment and music by The Central Band of the Royal Air Force.

The commemorative event at Amiens Cathedral was attended by Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, the Prime Minister, Theresa May, Minister for the Armed Forces Mark Lancaster and Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Nick Carter. MOD Crown Copyright.

The milestone is the final major commemoration event before the centenary of Armistice Day in November. Minister for the Armed Forces Mark Lancaster said:

It is an honour to be here on the anniversary of one of the most important battles in British history. This anniversary gives us a chance to reflect on the sacrifice and the achievements of British and Commonwealth troops and our allies who fought a century ago. The nations represented here today remain close allies, demonstrating that the legacy of our First World War partnerships continue in today's armed forces.

Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir Nick Carter said:

The Battle of Amiens marked the beginning of the end of the First World War. It was a remarkable achievement over the course of the war to expand the military, moulding a new citizen-based force into a very accomplished fighting force, against a backdrop of rapid technological change.

As I proudly stand in Amiens Cathedral, I shall be reflecting on the importance of allies and partners then and now, and the enduring requirement to experiment with new technology and tactics to determine how we can best employ it without waiting for the catalyst of war. But above all I shall reflect upon the fighting spirit and courage of those remarkable men and women who serve our country.

The event held in France at Amiens Cathedral was organised by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and was held in partnership with allied governments. During the event, The Central Band of the Royal Air Force led a multinational band comprising musicians from the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, France, Canada and Germany.

[News story: Defence Secretary confirms UK-US relationship remains unparalleled](#)

Mr Williamson was invited to America to be a guest of honour at a Sunset Parade in the US capital. He also reinforced close ties between the UK and US during a Pentagon meeting with Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis.

This followed a keynote speech at the Atlantic Council think-tank, where he emphasised the vital role of NATO, the need for long-term planning and the depth of UK-US collaboration.

Speaking to the Atlantic Council, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

For more than a hundred years our Armed Forces have fought in defence of our common values and interests. From the turmoil of the Great War, through the dark days of World War II. From the heat of Korea, to the chill of the Cold War. From the mountains of Afghanistan, to the deserts of Iraq today.

Our two countries have developed the deepest, broadest and most advanced Defence relationship of any two nations. The United States has never had nor will have a more reliable ally than the United Kingdom. Others may pretend, but you will find no greater ally than us.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson speaking at the Atlantic Council. Crown copyright.

After giving his speech to the Atlantic Council, during which he also outlined the UK's various deployments across the world, the Defence Secretary headed to the Pentagon to meet Secretary Mattis. Current threats to prosperity and safety, including Russia and the ongoing fight against Daesh, were among the issues that were high on the agenda.

Mr Williamson then attended an impressive Sunset Parade, where US Marines gave a skilled display of music from the United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps and a spectacular silent precision drill by the Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson with US Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis observe a sunset parade. Crown copyright.

The UK and US are the biggest overseas suppliers to each other's militaries and have worked closely on numerous key projects.

The most prominent of these is the F-35 fighter jet programme and a further five of the aircraft arrived at RAF Marham last week, two months after the first-ever RAF batch flew from the US. Unmanned Air Systems and a Common Missile Compartment for UK-US Ballistic Missile Submarines are other recent examples of collaboration.

Both nations play leading roles in NATO, which is vital to our transatlantic partnership. Both countries have been calling for other nations to invest more in security and to increase the readiness of their forces. By the end of 2018, eight members will be meeting the commitment of spending 2% of their GDP on defence compared with just three in 2014.

An even closer bond is expected after Brexit, as the UK establishes new relationships and trade deals outside of Europe.

[Research and analysis: Infrastructure finance review: insights for district](#)

heat network investment in the UK

This review of key UK infrastructure sub sectors by Deloitte was designed to identify lessons learnt from relevant infrastructure sub sectors that will help unlock third party finance for district heat/cooling networks in England and Wales.

Sectors explored include:

- energy from waste
- offshore wind
- ground mounted solar
- smart meter portfolios
- licenced offshore transmission links (OFTOs)
- interconnectors
- licenced Regulated Asset Base (RAB) networks under economic regulation
- infrastructure provider model as used in Thames Tideway Tunnel
- PFI / PF2 / PPP