

# Press release: Clay company pays heavy price for toxic discharge

The case was brought by the Environment Agency.

The offence occurred in July 2013 after staff at Rocks Dryers, a site operated by Imerys near Bugle, St Austell, flushed a hazardous substance called 'Jayfloc 85' out of a redundant storage tank and into drains where it entered a series of settlement lagoons before discharging into Rocks Stream, a tributary of the Par River.

Imerys failed to carry out a risk assessment despite Jayfloc85 being classified by its manufacturer as 'hazardous' and 'harmful to aquatic life'. Guidance on its use clearly states this chemical should not be allowed to enter 'drains/surface waters/ground waters'.

The company has an Environment Agency permit to discharge into the Rocks Stream from a single discharge point. Liquids entering the settlement lagoons undergo a basic treatment. China clay solids held in suspension settle out of the liquid and accumulate in the bottom of the lagoons. Sodium carbonate is then used to adjust the pH before the effluent is discharged. The system is not designed to treat toxic chemical pollutants such as Jayfloc85.

On the day of the offence, the chemical, which is used in the processing of china clay, was flushed out of the storage tank and into the site's effluent system and settlement lagoons via drains.

Imerys did not believe the chemical would harm the environment as it claimed the volume released was relatively small (estimated at 474 litres) and once in the settlement lagoons, it would have been heavily diluted.

The company failed to check the manufacturer's data sheet about the harm Jayfloc85 can cause if it escapes into streams, lakes and rivers. The chemical should have been removed from the site and either used elsewhere or taken to a permitted site for safe disposal.

The Par River, downstream of the discharge point, flows into Par Beach, a designated bathing water popular with holidaymakers.

Chris Barnes, for the Environment Agency, said:

This case demonstrates how important it is for site operators to have effective training and management systems in place to prevent the discharge of toxic chemicals into the environment. Clearly, this wasn't the case at Rocks Dryers where Imerys failed to properly assess the risks of emptying a hazardous substance into the site's drainage system. Had it done so, the company would have soon realised the disposal of hazardous chemical in this way is illegal.

At an earlier hearing Imerys Minerals Limited pleaded guilty to, on around 25 July 2013, discharging poisonous, noxious or polluting matter into inland freshwaters including the Rocks Stream, Rosevean Stream and Par River in contravention of Regulation 12(1)(b) of the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010.

Appearing before Truro Crown Court on 20 January 2017, the company was fined £75,000 and ordered to pay £25,000 costs.

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## **RR1083 – Risks to respiratory health in the grain industry**

A detailed literature search was carried out to summarise evidence about respiratory disease caused by exposure to grain dust. Long term epidemiological studies examining the risk for respiratory disease in grain workers were undertaken in Canada and the USA from the 1970s to the late 1990s. Smaller studies were undertaken in the UK and Europe but mostly focussed on respiratory disease in arable and livestock farmers.

The conclusion of this review is that the damaging effects of grain dust on the respiratory tract are accumulative and occur at high concentrations of exposure. Acute responses also occur and include declines in lung function as well as irritation and inflammation of the airways. There is less evidence that grain dust exposure causes occupational asthma despite the dusts containing allergens. This may be due to a 'healthy worker' effect with those already having, or developing, asthma leaving employment earlier than others. There is stronger evidence that the long term effects of exposure include emphysema, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and interstitial fibrosis of the lung. The risk of developing extrinsic allergic alveolitis has reduced through preventing damp conditions in stored grain.

Assistance in the use of Adobe Acrobat PDF files is available on our [FAQs](#) page.

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## **Today's report from the NAO should serve as a wake-up call to ministers –**

# Wayne David

**Wayne**

**David MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for the Armed Forces and Defence Procurement,** responding

to the National Audit Office's report on the MoD Equipment Plan, said:

"Today's

report from the National Audit Office should serve as a wake-up call to ministers. The warning signs have been there for a long time but it is becoming

increasingly clear that the Government is in danger of losing control of the defence budget.

"Ministers

ought to have clearly defined priorities and should ensure that, in these uncertain times, Britain's defence expenditure should not be the subject of ill

thought-out public expenditure cuts. The defence budget has been slashed since

2010 and the Government is only meeting the 2 per cent of GDP commitment through creative accounting.

"The

Government should meet this commitment properly. Ministers also need to respond

urgently to the concerns raised by the NAO. And they should confirm when the long-overdue National Shipbuilding Strategy will be published.

"Only

Labour can deliver a serious, joined-up Defence Industrial Strategy, as we did

in Government. Our approach would safeguard Britain's industrial base, secure high quality jobs throughout the supply chain, and protect our national sovereignty, while achieving value for money."

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## News story: Royal Air Force playing major role in world's premier air combat exercise

Based at Nellis Air Force Base, Exercise Red Flag pits 'Blue' coalition forces against hostile 'Red Force' aggressors, mirroring real-life threats in air-to-air, air-to-ground, space and cyber warfare.

Red Flag's live element takes place over the US Air Force's premier military training area in Nevada; over 15,000 square miles of airspace and 2.9 million acres of land – an impossible scale to achieve in Europe.

**Speaking about the Exercise, Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:**

The RAF is playing a major role alongside our greatest ally in the world's leading aerial combat training exercise.

Britain's pilots and aircrews will receive unparalleled training and an opportunity to sharpen the combat skills they are demonstrating every day in the fight against Daesh.

Training alongside our US partners and other nations shows how the UK is stepping up internationally, ensuring maximum interoperability with our allies, and in doing so helping keep Britain safer and more secure.

Typhoon jets, from 6 Squadron, RAF Lossiemouth, are operating in a swing-role capacity, fighting their way into hostile airspace, launching precision strikes on ground targets and fighting their way out again.



Typhoons taking on fuel from a RAF Voyager tanker during Exercie Red Flag.

Working with the US Air Force (USAF) F-35A Lightning II for the first time, and with USAF F-22 Raptors; the exercise has been a hugely rewarding exposure

to 5th Generation aircraft for RAF crews ahead of the F-35B's introduction into the RAF's combat inventory in 2018.



US Air Force aircraft on take off at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada USA during Exercise RED FLAG, 2017.

This is also the first time the RAF's Voyager is taking part in the exercise. The Voyager is providing key air-to-air refuelling capability during the exercise, while a Sentinel and Rivet Joint are gathering intelligence and other mission-critical information.

**Speaking from the exercise, Group Captain Graham Pemberton, RAF Detachment Commander said:**

Red Flag replicates truly challenging, high-end warfare, from realistic aerial combat to emerging cyber and space threats. It's as close as we can get to the real thing.

Testing ourselves against highly capable enemy aggressors is hugely beneficial and improves and readies our personnel, from pilots to those in crucial support roles, for real world operations.

It's a privilege for us to work with our US Air Force and Royal Australian Air Force counterparts and to cement our relationships with them at an exercise of this scale.

The exercise will run until early February and marks the start of three



months of RAF Typhoon activity in the USA.

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## [SNP tell those waiting on air weapons licences to store guns at a friend's](#)

- [Home](#)
- [Latest Releases](#)
- SNP tell those waiting on air weapons licences to store guns at a friend's

27 Jan 2017



The SNP has told people awaiting a new Scottish Government licence for air weapons to store their guns at a friend's house.

Justice secretary Michael Matheson confirmed 5436 people had applied for a licence under the SNP scheme since November 1.

And he said while police were now processing these "as quickly as possible", those awaiting a decision "must make arrangements to have their air weapons stored in a safe and appropriate place – either with someone who has an air weapon, firearm or shot gun certificate, or a registered firearm dealer".

He goes on to warn they must do this "to avoid committing an offence".

The Air Weapons and Licencing Act made it an offence for anyone to own an airgun without an official licence as of January 1.

The SNP's bid to do this has been consistently criticised, particularly in rural communities where they are necessary for work.

The answer came following a question in parliament by Scottish Conservative MSP Adam Tomkins.

Shadow justice secretary Douglas Ross also posed questions in Holyrood yesterday on the issue, including on why 500,000 air guns were still unaccounted for.

The British Association for Shooting and Conservation warned the moves would do nothing to cut crime, and instead place an extra burden on police firearms licencing teams.

It added the six-month timeframe for getting all airguns licenced was too short.

**Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Douglas Ross said:**

“This unnecessary process has been a mess from the start.

“Now those who complied with the rules are being told to get rid of their weapon and keep it at a friend’s house.

“This is a chaotic approach from the SNP, and hardly provides any confidence that it’s on top of this issue.

“It’s already a major inconvenience for law-abiding people who need air weapons for work to go through this process, and having to call on the help of a gun-owning neighbour makes it worse still.

“It shows again that the SNP doesn’t know rural Scotland, and doesn’t stand up for its interests.”

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**Below is a copy of the parliamentary answer from justice secretary Michael Matheson:**

Index Heading: Learning and Justice

**Adam Tomkins (Glasgow) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on the air weapons licensing scheme.

S50-00575

**Michael Matheson:**

Air weapons continue to account for almost half of all firearms offences recorded in Scotland – 158 offences in 2015-16. The new licensing regime came into effect on 31 December 2016 and will allow the police to better protect Scottish communities by removing air weapons from those who would misuse them.

Ahead of the new law taking effect, Police Scotland received 6,948 applications for an air weapon certificate by 31 October. Certificates, or refusals, have been issued in all but a limited number of cases, for example where further investigation is required or where payment has not yet been received from the applicant.

A further 5,436 applications were received between 1 November and 31 December 2016. Police Scotland are processing these as quickly as possible, but those who are awaiting a decision must make arrangements to have their air weapons stored in a safe and appropriate place – either with someone who has an air weapon, firearm or shot gun certificate, or a registered firearms dealer – to avoid committing an offence.

In addition, by 31 December, 18,935 unwanted air weapons had been surrendered to Police Scotland for secure destruction since the summer.

The new legislation come into effect on December 31:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-38469556>

The BASC has been critical of the move:

<https://basc.org.uk/blog/press-releases/latest-news/airgun-licensing-plans-in-scotland-fail-to-secure-all-party-support/>