

Press release: Doncaster scrap firm fined for illegal activity in Tyne & Wear

A Doncaster-based scrap car dismantling and salvage firm has been ordered to pay nearly £25,000 for breaking environmental laws at a site in Tyne & Wear.

Motorhog Ltd, which used the now-closed site on Wallsend Road in North Shields, to depollute and bale end of life vehicles, repeatedly broke the terms of its environmental permit. Yesterday (29 November 2017) the company, which continues to operate sites in Leeds, Doncaster and Hull, was fined £20,000 by North Tyneside Magistrates' Court after pleading guilty to two of three charges. It was also ordered to pay £4,936.88 costs.

The prosecution was brought by the Environment Agency after officers spent a significant amount of time attempting, unsuccessfully, to bring the site into compliance.

Environment Agency Officers visited the site on 1 December 2015 to assess permit compliance after several breaches were identified during a previous inspection. During the visit they identified further permit breaches, against which they issued two enforcement notices.

The first gave Motorhog Ltd until 8 February 2016 to carry out maintenance to the vehicle baler so it could operate without spilling or leaking potentially polluting materials. It also required the company to clean all observed spillages on site and keep appropriate records.

The second notice required Motorhog Ltd to either ensure the concrete surface where the vehicle baler operated was compliant with permit requirements or to move the baler to a more suitable area. The firm was given until 11 April 2016 to comply.

Environment Agency Officers visited the site again on 2 March and 12 April and noted failure to comply with each of the orders. They also noted unattended spills throughout the site, including fluids visibly leaking from the baler onto the surface below where there was no sealed drainage.

Environment Agency spokesperson, Rachael Caldwell, said:

I hope that Motorhog Ltd takes a long hard look at its operations across the north to ensure that all its sites are compliant and its staff are properly trained.

The regulations exist to protect the environment and local communities from the risk of harm. Vehicles contain liquids that are harmful to the environment and they must be dealt with correctly.

We will not hesitate to take action against any operator that repeatedly breaks the law and disregards its environmental obligations.

Press release: Free flood warning service for Silsden residents

The Environment Agency has been updating its flood warning systems across West Yorkshire, using new data to provide more accurate alerts to help communities to be better prepared for flooding.

Due to these changes, the Environment Agency is encouraging Silsden residents to check if they are at risk of flooding and to sign up to receive these early flood alert and warning messages so they can be aware of when flooding is possible.

Members of the Environment Agency's flood resilience team will be at Silsden Town Hall on Wednesday 6th December between 4-7pm, to give residents an opportunity to come and have their say on the new flood warning area, register for the free service and learn how to be prepared for flooding.

Heather Cottrill, from the Environment Agency's Flood Resilience team said:

Silsden Beck can rise and flow very quickly after heavy rain, but this new warning aims to alert the community in a timely manner, giving them more time to prepare, and to be aware of flooding so that they do not put themselves at danger.

Flood warnings give people valuable time to prepare for flooding – time that allows them to move themselves, their families and precious items to safety. Flood warnings save lives and enable the emergency services to prepare and help communities.

5.2 million homes and businesses in England are at risk of flooding.

Residents can find out if they are eligible to receive free flood warnings, and also register, by calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188, or by visiting <https://floodsdestroy.campaign.gov.uk/>. This website also includes information on how you can prepare for a flood and keep yourself safe.

[Press release: Berkshire boater prosecuted for keeping unregistered vessel on Thames](#)

This is contrary to the requirements of Article 4(1)(a) of the Environment Agency (Inland Waterways) Order 2010.

The defendant pleaded guilty at Reading Magistrates Court on Friday 17 November 2017, and was ordered to pay £797.65 to the Environment Agency in respect of unpaid registration fees and a victim surcharge of £20. Mr Gardener-Collins was given a conditional discharge for a period of 12 months and warned by the magistrates that if he offended again during the 12 month period, he could be re-sentenced for this offence.

A compensation order was made in the sum of £597.65 and the defendant agreed to pay £200 directly to the Environment Agency and provide the necessary documentation to enable the vessel to be registered for the remainder of 2017.

Mr Gardener-Collins' vessel UBIQUE II (also known as UBIQUE) was spotted by an Environment Agency Waterways Officer without a valid registration on Tuesday 21 February 2017 downstream from Cleeve Lock on the River Thames. The boat was served with a registration enforcement notice and the defendant was made fully aware, both verbally and in writing, that he was legally required to register his boat and failing to do so would risk prosecution.

Despite ample advice and guidance from waterways officers and acknowledgement from Mr Gardener-Collins of receipt of the Environment Agency's boat registration direct-debit forms, the defendant had still not applied by June 2017 and therefore his boat remained unregistered for 2017.

The Inland Waterways Order 2010 requires all vessels 'kept' or 'used' on the River Thames, to be registered with the Environment Agency and display a valid annual boat registration plate (similar to a vehicle tax disc).

The Environment Agency carries out checks along all 135 miles of the navigable non-tidal River Thames to ensure that all boats kept or used on it have a valid registration plate. It takes enforcement action against all those that don't.

It also takes enforcement action against a wide range of other offences relating to boating, often working as part of a multi-agency approach with the police and local councils.

Nick McKie-Smith, Environment Agency Waterways Operations Manager for compliance, said:

All boats must have valid registration, boat safety certificate and

minimum third party insurance at all times. Boaters must renew their annual registrations each year for the Environment Agency waterway they want to keep or use their boat on. If they need to renew their registration for 2018 then they must do so before 1 January. For genuine visiting boats it is also possible to buy a visitor registration for shorter periods.

The income we raise from boat registration is vital. It helps fund every aspect of the service our specialist River Thames Waterways Operations team provides to enable safe boating on all 135 miles of the non-tidal Thames. This includes maintaining and repairing 45 sets of locks and weirs – many of which are important heritage features – as well as providing a range of facilities to help enhance boaters' experience while out on the river. By not complying, we lose vital revenue, which hinders our ability to maintain the high standards of service we set ourselves, and which our customers expect.

Owners of boats not displaying valid registration plates could face prosecution, so it is important that they are aware of and adhere to this requirement. Ignorance is not an excuse.

[Further information on how to register a boat.](#)

Press release: Yorkshire Water fined for raw sewage leak

On 27 November 2017, Yorkshire Water Services Limited appeared at Sheffield Crown Court and pleaded guilty to charges relating to a water pollution incident in Doncaster which led to the deaths of several hundred fish.

They were fined £45,000 and ordered to pay Environment Agency costs of £24,762.56 as well as a victim surcharge of £120.

Proceedings were brought by the Environment Agency following the pollution incident in April 2014 where raw sewage was discharged from the defendant company's pumping station at Sandy Lane, Belle View in Doncaster, South Yorkshire into a water course and ultimately into 2 local ponds.

The discharge of sewage resulted in a raised level of ammonia in the water of the ponds and a reduced level of dissolved oxygen for a considerable period of time. The pollution from the illegal discharge was traced for over 3.5km downstream from the pumping station and a large number of fish died due to the toxic effects of ammonia.

Yorkshire Water Services Limited operates the pumping station under an environmental permit, and is required to ensure the site operates correctly. There was a breach of conditions of the permit on this occasion which caused an unlawful discharge.

Richard Moore, Team Leader at the Environment Agency said:

Safeguarding the environment is an essential part of how all water companies must operate. The sentencing in this case shows we will continue to take companies to task where they fail to meet environmental standards.

Press release: Managing hazardous materials advice for Astonfields businesses

The advice and guidance Environment Agency staff gave to businesses on the Astonfields Industrial Estate, Stafford, will ensure that local businesses manage their hazardous waste and materials to help prevent pollution in the future.

In this unannounced day of action, more than 50 businesses were visited and inspected by Environment Agency staff. The inspections checked a number of things, including how hazardous materials are stored, how they are disposed of, whether the site and its drains are maintained and if businesses know what to do if something did spill into surface water drains.

James Perry, from the Environment Agency's Hazardous Waste Team, explains why it's important to reduce the risk of pollution:

Hazardous materials used in industrial processes can be washed into the surface water drains by rain. These drains usually flow directly into a brook or a river which means hazardous materials can pollute the water, causing a problem for fish and other aquatic life. In serious cases, a pollution can also affect other businesses who use the water for their industrial processes or even affect drinking water.

By offering advice and guidance on measures businesses can take to reduce the risk of pollution, we're seeking to make sure the owners have robust processes in place to prevent a pollution and know what to do if something goes wrong. This is really important; at the

Environment Agency we follow the 'polluter pays principle', so if something does happen, the company responsible will have to pay the costs of clean up and recovery.

The Marston Brook flows near the industrial estate and has suffered from low levels of pollution from materials washed into it from surface water drains for a number of years. It is hoped this day of action will reduce the level of pollution seen in the Marston Brook.

If anyone is concerned about the business practices at any site, or if there is a pollution in a river or brook, please contact the Environment Agency's 24/7 incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.