

## Press release: Significant fine for water company following hazardous chemical leak

On 19 April 2018, at Derby Crown Court, sitting in Nottingham, Severn Trent Water Limited was fined £350,000, ordered to pay Environment Agency costs of £68,003, as well as a victim surcharge of £120.

An estimated 30,000 dead fish and 5km of damaged ecology along the River Amber led to proceedings brought against Severn Trent Water Limited following a pollution incident.

On 1 November 2015, the Environment Agency received reports of several hundred dead fish in the River Amber in Derbyshire and, following a search of the area, and discussions with Severn Trent Water employees, the source of the pollution was found to be a release of sodium hydroxide from the Ogston Water Treatment works, operated by Severn Trent Water, into the river.

Severn Trent Water identified that a leak within a chamber at the Treatment works had led to the contents becoming contaminated with sodium hydroxide, which was then washed through the road gully into the River Amber via an outfall pipe.

The pollution had a significant negative impact on the fish and invertebrate populations within the River Amber. The Environment Agency has been monitoring the natural recovery of the river ecology over the last two years. Monitoring has shown that whilst there has been some improvements, something resembling a full recovery is not expected until the summer of this year.

In passing sentence, His Honour Judge Smith found that:

It beggars belief that a company of the size and expertise of Severn Trent Water had no policy whatsoever in respect of potential incidents arising in connection with their dosing chamber, either at this treatment works or indeed at any others throughout the UK. To have no policy whatsoever when dangerous chemicals could have leaked out in any number of ways is highly negligent. The size and success of Severn Trent makes it even more astonishing.

In mitigation Severn Trent expressed regret and apologises for the incident. The company co-operated fully with the investigation and contributed £228,000 to the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

Speaking after the case, an Environment Agency officer involved with the investigation said:

This is a significant fine imposed on Severn Trent Water Limited for causing pollution. I hope it sends a strong message that it is far more cost effective to avoid these incidents, as we will continue to take companies and individuals to task where they ignore their responsibilities.

Pollution causes damage to the environment and river ecology, in this case sodium hydroxide with a concentration of 20% amounts to a hazardous chemical and the leak affected 5km of the River Amber and killed approximately 30,000 fish and damaged other wildlife.

We encourage anyone who sees suspected pollution to call our incident hotline 0800 90 80 70 so we can act to reduce damage, investigate and in serious cases take enforcement action.

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## **[News story: NDA announces new Chair of Sellafield Ltd Board](#)**

Lorraine has extensive experience in senior roles across a range of

international companies and high-profile public sector organisations, including Thames Water, the Olympic Delivery Authority and London and Continental Railways Ltd. As Chair of Sellafield Ltd, Lorraine will report directly to David Peattie.

In her role as Chair of the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Council, Lorraine Baldry has already gained valuable experience of working within the nuclear industry.

David Peattie said:

I am extremely pleased to welcome Lorraine as Chair of the Sellafield Ltd Board. Her contribution will be valuable to Sellafield Ltd, as it continues to make progress in cleaning up the hazards left from the earliest days of the UK's nuclear industry.

Her unique blend of experience, from a diverse range of organisations in the private and public sector, will help Sellafield provide a continued focus on safety while making decommissioning progress and delivering value for the UK taxpayer.

Lorraine Baldry said:

I am privileged to be given this opportunity, as Chair of Sellafield Ltd, to help the organisation in its mission to clean up some of the most complex nuclear facilities in Europe.

The next few years will be an important time for Sellafield as we look towards the end of nuclear fuel reprocessing and making accelerated progress in decommissioning and hazard reduction.

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## [Tyre recycling company and manager sentenced for illegal Ayrshire tyre site](#)

 20 April 2018

Scotland's environmental watchdog is reminding all companies of the importance of working within the regulations after an Ayrshire tyre recycling company was fined £27,000 on 18 April 2018, and a manager of the company was ordered to carry out 300 hours of unpaid work under a Community Payback Order and to pay a Confiscation Order of £44,711 for waste offences at a site in

Irvine.

The above assets are available for print, online and broadcast media to use to illustrate this story. Please [click through to our media gallery](#) to download them – no registration is required. All related items will be shown on the same page.

Autowaste Services Scotland Ltd, and a manager Stephen Gillies, had pled guilty at Kilmarnock Sheriff Court to depositing, keeping, sorting and baling waste tyres at Unit 32B Kyle Road, Irvine without a waste management licence. The company had also failed to remove the waste tyres when required to do so by a notice served by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

Terry A'Hearn, SEPA's Chief Executive, said

"This is the sort of tough action we need to be seen taking against these sort of operators who have no regard for Scotland's environment.

"Every society has a series of waste streams, it's important that they're minimised, it's important that, to the extent we have them, they're managed properly. This behaviour is the opposite of that, and SEPA will continue to take action against these sorts of operators and make sure they're held to account. So this is a message to good operators in the waste sector, that you won't be undermined by this sort of poor performance. And it's a message to the community that your environment will be looked after because we will find these sort of operators and make sure that the appropriate enforcement action is taken."

SEPA officers visited the site over 18 times between October 2014 and October 2015 after they discovered that many more waste tyres were being kept or deposited onto the site than were allowed under the terms of a registered waste exemption. Numerous verbal discussions took place with the company's management and they were sent advisory letters, warning letters and statutory notices about the limitations of the exemptions regime and the requirement for a waste management licence.

In October 2015 there were more than 46,000 waste tyres at the site. At that time, an operator needed to hold a waste management licence if more than 1,000 waste tyres were being stored on a site. (A change in the law on 1 April 2016 requires a licence if any quantity of third party tyres are to be stored). A licence is also required to sort and bale tyres. However, Autowaste Services Scotland Ltd did not hold a waste management licence for the site.

The illegal and improper storage of large numbers of tyres presents a serious fire risk to the environment and communities. A waste management licence would include the requirements that must be in place to provide protection to the environment and human health. As the risk to the environment at this site was significant, and the company did not take the required action to bring the site into compliance, SEPA was left with no option other than to pursue criminal prosecution by submitting a report to the Procurator Fiscal.

SEPA's Amanda Reilly said:

"SEPA works every day to protect the environment and we are very clear that compliance is not optional. Autowaste Services Scotland Ltd and its management were fully aware that it contravened environmental legislation in permitting waste tyres to be deposited, kept and baled at the site. The company had made several applications for Waste Management Licences, these were all returned due to a lack of information, but the company continued its activities even though a licence was not in place.

"In addition we would strongly urge landowners leasing out premises to businesses or individuals to remain vigilant to it being used for illegal waste activities such as the unauthorised storage of tyres. It is essential that landowners are aware they may have to pay out thousands of pounds for the removal of tyres left abandoned on their land by someone else. In this instance the local authority was left with a bill of nearly £60,000 to clear the site.

"SEPA is engaging with various companies, trade bodies and partner agencies to develop a plan for the future compliance state of the tyre sector as well as identifying where the sector as a whole can contribute to improvement of the environment, local communities and Scotland's economy."

**Ends**

#### **Notes to editor**

The exact charges Autowaste Services Scotland Limited and Stephen Gilles pled guilty to were:

- Between 21st October 2014 and 9th October 2015 in or on land at Unit 32B, Kyle Road, Irvine, KA12 8LH, you Autowaste Services Scotland Ltd and Stephen Gillies did deposit, knowingly cause and knowingly permit to be deposited controlled waste, namely waste tyres on or in said land without the authority of a waste management licence; Contrary to the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 33(1)(a) & (6) as amended. And the foregoing offence was committed with the consent and connivance of or was attributable to the neglect of you Stephen Gillies, being a manager, or person purporting to be a manager, of the said company and being a person to whom Section 157(1) of the aforementioned Act applies.
- Between 21st October 2014 and 9th October 2015 at Unit 32B Kyle Road, Irvine, KA12 8LH you Autowaste Services Scotland Ltd and Stephen Gillies did treat and keep controlled waste, namely waste tyres, and did knowingly cause and knowingly permit controlled waste, namely waste tyres, to be treated and kept in or on said land otherwise than in accordance with a waste management licence in that waste tyres were treated by sorting and baling and were kept on said land all when no waste management licence was in force authorising such keeping; Contrary to the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 33(1)(b)(i). And the foregoing offence was committed with the consent and connivance of or

was attributable to the neglect of you Stephen Gillies, being a manager, or person purporting to be a manager, of the said company and being a person to whom Section 157(1) of the aforementioned Act applies.

- On 8th October 2015 at Unit 32B Kyle Road, Irvine, KA12 8LH you Autowaste Services Scotland Ltd, being the occupier of said land, did without reasonable excuse fail to comply with a requirement imposed under Section 59 (1)(a) of the aforementioned Act in that you failed to remove from said land all controlled waste deposited there namely waste tyres including tyre bales having been required to do so in a notice served on you under said section by the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency on 15th September 2015.

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## Corporate report: Robotics and artificial intelligence research and development: preferred option

Further developments in RAI technology could improve UK nuclear decommissioning in ways that could be faster, cheaper, safer and with less environmental impact.

Robotics and Artificial Intelligence (RAI) is a broad area of technology. It includes interconnected, interactive, cognitive and physical tools, able to variously perceive their environments, reason about events, make or revise plans and control their actions. RAI technologies perform useful tasks for us in the real world, extending our capabilities, increasing our productivity and reducing our risks.

Through our work on emerging technologies, RAI technologies have been identified as technologies that could significantly improve the existing technical baseline for decommissioning the UK's nuclear legacy. Whilst our mission is already benefitting from the use of some RAI technologies, further improvements in RAI technology could significantly enhance the situation. This will require Research and Development (R&D).

This Preferred Option paper outlines our preferred approach for delivering this R&D.