

SEPA takes action to stop offensive odours from Blantyre site

13 June 2018

SEPA has issued an enforcement notice to GP Green Recycling Limited following investigations into complaints from members of the public about odours from their composting operations on Newhousemill Road, Blantyre.

- SEPA has issued an enforcement notice requiring GP Green Recycling Limited to ensure that all emissions from the site are free from offensive odour by 20 July 2018
- SEPA will not tolerate the unacceptable impact the site is having on local communities

GP Green Recycling Limited undertakes activities such as the composting of co-mingled green waste and food caddy waste arising from domestic collections.

SEPA officers have carried out numerous odour assessments and in April and May found offensive odours from the composting site outside the site boundary and at housing areas in Hamilton and East Kilbride.

The enforcement notice requires the operator to undertake a comprehensive review and report this to SEPA. They must then take remedial actions to ensure the site is compliant with its licence and that all emissions from the site are free from offensive odour by 20 July 2018. The operator is being cooperative and has already committed to taking actions required by the enforcement notice.

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

Every day SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland's environment, and we are clear that compliance is non-negotiable. SEPA officers have attended the GP Green Recycling site and the surrounding area on a number of occasions to carry out odour assessments in response to complaints from the public.

"We recognise that the site provides an important green recycling service but we will not tolerate the unacceptable impact it is having on local communities in the surrounding area. The improvements required should alleviate the odours from the site, but we will not hesitate to take further action if this does not resolve the odour issues.

"We would advise members of the public to contact our 24-hour Pollution Hotline on 0800 807060 when they are affected by odours and SEPA will investigate."

[SEPA and Health & Safety Executive announce joint investigation into Mossmorran complex at community meeting as operating permit variations to be served on operators](#)

 08 June 2018

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) & the Health and Safety Executive today (Friday 8th June 2018) announced a joint investigation into ExxonMobil Chemical Ltd and Shell UK Limited, the operators of the Mossmorran petrochemical plants in Fife.

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.

- Scottish Environment Protection Agency & the Health and Safety Executive announce joint investigation into Mossmorran complex following April ‘final warning’ letters for environmental non-compliance.
- Operating permit variations to be served on operators following a review (announced in April) to strengthen noise and vibration controls.
- October, March and May flaring incidents and monitoring data remain under investigation to avoid prejudice to future enforcement action.
- SEPA Chief Executive Terry A’Hearn meets MP, MSPs, Councillors and communities to hear first-hand accounts of local impacts.

The move follows the serving of Final Warning Letters on both companies by the agency in April 2018 related to “preventable and unacceptable” unplanned flaring during June 2017.

Operating permit variations are to be served on ExxonMobil Chemical Ltd and Shell UK Limited following a review announced in April, to strengthen noise and vibration controls. These will be published on SEPA’s website next week.

Hearing first-hand accounts of the constituency MP, MSPs, Councillors and communities, SEPA Chief Executive, Terry A’Hearn, explained why October,

March and May flaring incidents and monitoring data required to remain under investigation to avoid prejudice to future enforcement action.

Speaking after the community meeting in Kirkcaldy, SEPA Chief Executive, Terry A'Hearn, said:

"Every day, SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland's environment and compliance with Scotland's environmental rules is simply non-negotiable.

"We were clear that unplanned flaring in June 2017 was preventable and unacceptable and we issued final warnings to both companies in that regard. Despite that, communities have endured further unplanned flaring in October, March and again in May.

"We've listened carefully to community calls for a root and branch review and today's announcement of a joint investigation by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) & the Health & Safety Executive will examine issues at both sites.

"But more than that, in April we promised a review of operating permits. Operating permit variations will be served on ExxonMobil Chemical Ltd and Shell UK in the next week. These permits are legal documents which set out what each operator must do under law.

"It's right that people want to know more about October, March and May flaring incidents. That said, people want action not words which is why I've come personally to explain why these incidents remain under investigation and why we need to avoid prejudice to future enforcement action.

"We're listening to the community and it's important the companies do too."

ENDS

[Cracking down on waste criminals: £49,000 fines for Strathblane landfill operator and Cumbernauld waste management company](#)

 30 May 2018

The operator of a Strathblane landfill site was fined £37,000 at Stirling Sheriff Court on Wednesday 8 May after landfilling inappropriate waste at their site for over two and a half years. A Cumbernauld-based waste management company was also fined £12,000 for failing in its Duty of Care.

The latest figures mean a new total of six SEPA led waste crime prosecutions in the last 12 months resulting in £120,000 fines, £47,211 in Confiscation Orders and five Community Payback Orders totalling 1,150 hours.

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- £37,000 fine for Muirhouse Landfill Limited, Strathblane.
- £12,000 fine for Dow Waste Management Limited, Cumbernauld.
- Six SEPA led waste crime prosecutions in last 12 months.
- Five waste crime fines, five Community Payback Orders and two Confiscation Orders in last 12 months.

Muirhouse Landfill Limited pled guilty to two charges of failing to comply with six different conditions of their permit, one of which was that the site could only be used for landfilling inert waste. Dow Waste Management Limited (which recently changed its name to Dow Group Limited) pled guilty to failing to properly describe their waste when completing waste transfer notes, and failing to have a system in place to identify problems.

A report on both companies was sent to the Procurator Fiscal following investigations carried out by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

Anne Anderson, SEPA Chief Officer, said:

“Every day SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland’s environment and we’re clear that compliance is non-negotiable.

“SEPA is committed to cracking down on waste criminals and with the site receiving inappropriate wastes, it’s right that Muirhouse Landfill Limited was fined £37,000. This type of criminality has a serious impact on the local environment, legitimate waste operators and the local community as well as the public purse in lost landfill tax revenue.

“It’s also encouraging that Dow Waste Management Limited (now Dow Group Limited) was fined £12,000 for on occasions failing to properly identify and describe their waste which made it more difficult for people dealing with those wastes further down the line to satisfy themselves that they could accept the waste. SEPA staff worked hard to bring the perpetrators to justice and these sentences recognise that significant effort.”

Muirhouse Quarry in Strathblane was licensed as an inert landfill site by SEPA in March 2007. Inert waste does not degrade so does not pose a hazard to human health or the environment when disposed of. Examples are gravel, sand, and stone. As a result inert landfill sites require different environmental controls than sites that accept waste that does degrade, because degradable waste produces landfill gas and leachate (a highly polluting liquid created when water filters through waste and collects decomposing materials).

In 2009 SEPA received a complaint that inappropriate waste was being disposed of at the site. SEPA takes reports of pollution very seriously, and on visiting the site officers found timber, plastics and polystyrene, which the site was not licensed to accept. They instructed the site to remove the materials, which was done, and were told that steps would be taken to ensure it did not happen again.

Following further substantiated complaints in 2011, SEPA officers witnessed waste being accepted outside the licence times and without being checked before disposal, an intensive investigation approach was taken. Specialist waste officers were sent onto the site and they inspected more frequently and at unusual times, whilst carrying out a full audit against each and every condition of the permit. On 10 October 2011 an enforcement notice was served in relation to 15 breaches of permit conditions, requiring these be remedied by 1 November.

Around the same time concerning groundwater results were submitted by the operator, as required in their permit. These showed that levels of Chemical Oxygen Demand were between 12 and 18 times the permitted limit.

SEPA's own scientists therefore carried out full environmental monitoring of gas, soil and leachate on and around the site, and found the levels were typical of those found at non-inert landfills. As the site did not have the infrastructure in place to deal with that type of waste, SEPA suspended the permit on the grounds that the site was presenting an imminent risk of serious pollution.

The suspension notice required the operator to fully assess the site (in order to quantify the extent of the problem) and thereafter to remove the risk of pollution. None of the requirements in the statutory notice were complied with and the suspension remains in place. When it became apparent that the company was not prepared to carry out even the initial assessment, SEPA arranged to hire excavation plant and carry out sample digs around the site – at its own expense.

In March 2012, over three days of excavations, SEPA dug approximately 30 trial pits. Of these 30 pits there were 21 containing inappropriate waste types, including wood, plastics, polystyrene, carpet, metals, papers, letters, cardboard, toys, shoes, books, clothing, tyres, hessian sacks, catalogues and magazines. Many of the pits also had an odour of landfill gas and black-coloured leachate.

SEPA's point of contact (and the named technically competent person) for this site was, until October 2011, one of the company's directors. As he was also a director of Dow Waste Management Ltd, the investigation came to identify that on occasion Dow Waste Management Ltd's waste transfer notes had not properly identified and described the nature of their waste, nor was there a system in place to identify notes that weren't properly completed. This makes it difficult for people to whom the waste is transferred to know how and where it can be disposed of legally.

Ends

Notes to editor

- Chemical Oxygen Demand is a measurement of the oxygen required to oxidize organic matter in water. The higher the levels the more organic material in the sample, which will reduce dissolved oxygen levels in the water. This means there is less oxygen available for aquatic life.

The exact charges Muirhouse Landfill Limited and Dow Waste Management Limited (now Dow Group Limited) pled guilty to were:

1. On various occasions between 05 March 2009 and 18 November 2011, both dates inclusive, at Muirhouse Quarry, Milngavie Road, Strathblane, G63 9AH you MUIRHOUSE LANDFILL LIMITED, being a permit holder in terms of regulation 7 of the aftermentioned regulations, and being an operator of said permit, did fail to comply with a condition of said permit namely 4.2.1 which stated that the operator shall ensure that the site landfill is only used for landfilling inert waste in that you did landfill non-inert waste inter alia wood, plastics, polystyrene, carpet, metals, papers, letters, cardboard, toys, shoes, books, clothing, tyres, hessian sacks, catalogues and magazines and you did fail to ensure that the site landfill was only used for landfilling inert waste; CONTRARY to the Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations 2000 Regulation 30(1)(b) as amended, and the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999 Section 2.
2. On various occasions between 05 April 2009 and 20 February 2012, both dates inclusive, at Muirhouse Quarry, Milngavie Road, Strathblane, G63 9AH you MUIRHOUSE LANDFILL LIMITED, being a permit holder in terms of regulation 7 of the aftermentioned regulations, and being an operator of said permit did fail to comply with a condition of said permit which stated at condition 4.7.1 that any vehicles delivering waste to the permitted installation shall not be permitted to proceed to the infilling area unless the operator has assessed the waste at the entrance to the Permitted Installation and is satisfied that the waste is compliant with the terms of the Permit, condition 4.7.2 which stated that the Operator shall visually inspect the waste at the point of deposit and shall be satisfied that the waste falls within the type and quantity of the waste permitted, condition 2.2.1 which stated that the site shall only receive waste and waste operations shall only take place after 0800hrs Monday to Friday and after 0900 hrs on a Saturday, condition 4.5.1 which stated that the operator shall ensure that all waste accepted for deposit at the site landfill has been characterised such that all information necessary for the safe disposal of the waste in the long term is available and condition 4.5.3 which stated that the operator shall keep a register showing the quantities of waste deposited, the dates of its delivery and details of the characterisation of said wastes in that you did; i) fail to assess waste at the entrance to the Permitted Installation and allow non-compliant waste to proceed to the infilling area ii) fail to visually inspect the waste at the point of deposit and fail to be satisfied that the waste was permitted, iii) receive waste and allow waste operations to take place on site

earlier than the permitted daily time iv) fail to characterise waste accepted for deposit at the site landfill v) fail to keep a register of such information and between 10 October 2011 and 20 February 2012 did fail to comply with condition 10.1.5 which stated that the operator shall carry out groundwater sampling and monitoring as required within the permit and did fail to carry out said ground water sampling and monitoring; CONTRARY to the Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations 2000 Regulation 30(1)(b) as amended, and the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999 Section 2.

3. On various occasions between 5 April 2009 and 5 April 2011, both dates inclusive, you DOW WASTE MANAGEMENT LIMITED being a person who treats, keeps and disposes of controlled waste, namely household, commercial and industrial waste, at 23 Lenziemill Road, Lenziemill Industrial Estate, Cumbernauld, G67 2RL did fail to take all such measures applicable to you in that capacity as were reasonable in the circumstances to prevent any contravention by any other person of a condition of a permit granted under regulation 7 of the Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations 2000 in that on various occasions you did fail to properly identify and describe the nature of your waste when completing waste transfer notes in respect of transfers and did fail to have in place a system to identify said waste transfer notes which were not properly identified or described: CONTRARY to the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 34(1)(aa) and (6).

Scottish recycling, composting and re-use rockets past 60% milestone

✘ 29 May 2018

Scottish recycling, composting and re-use of waste from all sources has rocketed past the 60% milestone for the first time. That was the key finding of Official Statistics published today (29th May 2018) by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

- Scottish recycling, composting and re-use of waste from all sources rockets past 60% for the first time.
- Food recycling and anaerobic digestion increased 20% from 2015 – a 78.1% increase since 2011.
- Lowest quantity of Scottish waste landfilled since 2011.

In 2016, 6.96 million tonnes (61%) of waste was recycled, composted or prepared for re-use, over half a million tonnes more than in 2015.

What's more, 2016 also saw more households and businesses recycle food waste as 605,614 tonnes of organic wastes was recycled in composting or anaerobic digestion facilities – an increase of 102,580 tonnes (20.4%) from 2015

statistics and a 78.1% boost since 2011.

Total waste generated in Scotland fell by over half a million tonnes (0.53m tonnes) since 2015, with Scotland achieving the lowest quantity of waste being landfilled since 2011 – a 10.3% decrease from 2015.

Terry A’Hearn, Chief Executive of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, said:

“Recycling is a real Scottish success story and a simple daily step that communities, corner shops or corporates can take to build a more sustainable Scotland. The scale of the environmental challenge is enormous and we know we live on one planet, but consume the resources of three.

“The most successful countries in the 21st century will be resource efficient, circular economies, where what once was waste is valued as a resource. We are committed to helping all regulated businesses do more to support waste prevention and facilitate the use of secondary resources in the economy, helping communities and businesses thrive within the resources of our planet.”

Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham said:

“I’m pleased to see that the amount of Scottish waste being collected in Scotland has decreased. For the first time we’ve recycled more than 60% of our waste from all sources which shows we are making progress towards our 2025 target of 70% and our work to promote and simplify recycling is paying off.”

Iain Gulland, Chief Executive, Zero Waste Scotland, said:

“These figures show some really positive progress towards a more circular economy – a big increase in recycling and reuse, more food waste being recycled, less waste going to landfill, and especially less climate-harming biodegradable waste. This has been achieved with hard work from local authorities and others, as well as the growing understanding of the importance of recycling and waste reduction in homes and businesses.

“They also show the importance of setting an ambitious and long-term policy direction. Scotland has led the way by introducing stretching targets and measures to limit and ultimately phase out the use of landfill for the most polluting wastes. That’s why Scotland is recognised as a world leader on the circular economy and why others are now emulating our approach.”

This is a Policy statement and relates to the [Official Statistics](#) published at 9.30 am and available on SEPA’s website.

Data on waste is collected to monitor policy effectiveness, and to support policy development, particularly commitments in the Scottish Government’s [Making Things Last – A Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland](#).

Scotland's bathing waters continue to meet strict environmental standards ahead of new season

25 May 2018

As Scotland sizzles in the early summer sun, and with hundreds of thousands of Scottish families and visitors expected to head to our stunning coastlines for the bathing season (1st June – 15th September), the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has revealed that 75 of the country's 86 designated bathing waters (87%) meet strict environmental standards for water quality.

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- 87% of Scotland's designated bathing waters meet strict environmental water quality standards.
- Water quality data available by 10.00 am every day during the season for 31 bathing water locations on www.bathingwaters.mobi, SEPA's website, via Beachline and live electronic beach signage.
- Partnership projects underway to improve bathing waters including 11 rated as 'poor'.
- Nairn bathing waters achieve the sufficient EU classification for the first time after 2 years of poor rating.

Rating	Number of bathing waters	Percentage
Excellent	25	29
Good	34	39
Sufficient	16	19
Poor	11	13
OVERALL	86	100%

Ranked as the most beautiful country in the world by Rough Guide, Scotland's natural environment is world-renowned. Its beaches range from remote, unspoilt Hebridean sands to golden stretches along northern and eastern coves and popular Western shores.

Beach users will have access to real time water quality information from across Scotland's designated beaches thanks to SEPA scientists who sample and combine with state-of-the-art weather data to provide daily bathing water forecasts throughout the three and a half months. These are available at 31 bathing water locations by 10am every morning through:

Terry A'Hearn, Chief Executive of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, said:

"Every day SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland's stunning environment and we are committed to ensuring all of Scotland's designated bathing waters meet water quality standards.

"Having achieved the highest rate of compliance since the new Bathing Water Directive began we are already seeing many of our priority projects having a positive impact. Both Nairn sites, which have passed for the first time since 2015, have made good progress through working with partners and communities to coordinate activities and identify actions to address water quality challenges.

"Working with partners, we're continuing our focus on bathing waters rated as 'poor', with tailored improvement plans prepared by SEPA. These projects will result in major improvements to bathing water quality in the future and should see improvements over the coming season."

Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham said:

"Protecting and improving our bathing waters is crucial for our environment, for local economies which rely on beach tourism and for people who will be able to enjoy our seaside resorts and beaches over the summer months.

"Partnership working between SEPA, Scottish Water, local authorities, the farming sector, and communities is vital to achieving better results and I am pleased to see that this work has helped to drive forward improvements this season."

A Scottish Water spokeswoman said:

"We are pleased to see the continued improvement in bathing water performance. Scottish Water has undertaken significant investment in partnership with SEPA in recent years to support bathing water quality.

"We are committed to delivering investment where our assets are found to be compromising quality. We continue to work with SEPA and a range of agencies, local authorities, beach users and other relevant organisations to improve bathing water quality where required.

"People can help by ensuring that they only flush the right things down toilets – the three Ps: pee, poo and paper – to avoid causing blockages to drains and sewers which can cause pollution on beaches."

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

2018 results in full

Highland and Islands

(8 excellent, 4 good, 4 sufficient,
0 poor)

Achmelvich	Excellent
Dores	Good
Dornoch	Excellent
Dunnet	Excellent
Ettrick Bay	Good
Findhorn	Good
Gairloch Beach	Excellent
Ganavan	Excellent
Loch Morlich	Excellent
Lossiemouth (East)	Sufficient
Machrihanish	Excellent
Nairn (Central)	Sufficient
Nairn (East)	Sufficient
Rosemarkie	Good
Sand Beach	Excellent
Thurso	Sufficient

Lothian, mid Scotland and Fife

(8 excellent, 5 good, 1 sufficient,
3 poor)

Aberdour (Silversands)	Excellent
Aberdour Harbour (Black Sands)	Good
Anstruther (Billow Ness)	Excellent
Burntisland	Good
Crail (Roome Bay)	Excellent
Elie (Harbour) and Earlsferry	Excellent
Elie (Ruby Bay)	Excellent
Fisherrow Sands	Poor
Kinghorn (Harbour Beach)	Poor
Kinghorn (Pettycur)	Good
Kingsbarns	Excellent
Kirkcaldy (Seafield)	Good
Leven	Good
Portobello (Central)	Sufficient
Portobello (West)	Poor
St Andrews (East Sands)	Excellent
St Andrews (West Sands)	Excellent

North East Scotland

(4 excellent, 8 good, 4 sufficient,
1 poor)

Aberdeen	Sufficient
Arbroath (West Links)	Good
Balmedie	Excellent
Broughty Ferry	Excellent

Carnoustie	Good
Collieston	Good
Cruden Bay	Poor
Cullen Bay	Sufficient
Fraserburgh (Philorth)	Excellent
Fraserburgh (Tiger Hill)	Sufficient
Inverboyndie	Sufficient
Lunan Bay	Good
Monifieth	Good
Montrose	Excellent
Peterhead (Lido)	Good
Rosehearty	Good
Stonehaven	Good

Solway
(1 excellent, 2 good, 0 sufficient, 4 poor)

Brighthouse Bay	Poor
Carrick	Good
Dhoon Bay	Poor
Mosyard	Good
Rockcliffe	Poor
Sandyhills	Poor
Southernness	Excellent

South East Scotland
(3 excellent, 9 good, 2 sufficient, 1 poor)

Broad Sands	Good
Coldingham	Good
Dunbar (Belhaven)	Good
Dunbar (East)	Good
Yellow Craig	Sufficient
Eyemouth	Poor
Gullane	Excellent
Longniddry	Good
North Berwick (Milsey Bay)	Good
North Berwick (West)	Good
Pease Bay	Excellent
Seacliff	Excellent
Seton Sands	Sufficient
Thorntonloch	Good
Whitesands	Good

West Scotland
(1 excellent, 6 good, 5 sufficient, 2 poor)

Ayr (South Beach)	Poor
Culzean	Sufficient
Girvan	Sufficient
Heads of Ayr	Poor

Irvine	Sufficient
Largs (Pencil Beach)	Good
Lunderston Bay	Good
Luss Bay	Sufficient
Maidens	Good
Millport Bay	Excellent
Prestwick	Good
Saltcoats/Ardrossan	Sufficient
Seamill	Good
Troon (South Beach)	Good

The revised Bathing Water Directive

Under the revised Bathing Water Directive:

- classifications are calculated at the end of the 2017 season for display on all beaches at the start of the 2018 season;
- water quality classification applies for the whole season;
- the overall condition of a location is described through bathing water profiles.

Wet weather problems

- Diffuse pollution is the largest pollution pressure on the water environment in Scotland, but it can be difficult to identify and control. The risk of diffuse pollution is worse during rainfall because nutrients, soil, chemicals and faecal bacteria can be washed from land into the surrounding water environment. Single discharge points might not seem to be an issue, but several combined across a whole river catchment can significantly affect water quality, including in EU designated bathing waters. Land and run-off management practices play a pivotal role in diffuse pollution mitigation.
- Another source of pollution at beaches can be combined sewer overflows (CSOs). During heavy rainfall CSOs, which discharge diluted but minimally treated sewage to watercourses and coastal waters, are essential to prevent flooding. However, during extended periods of rain, which are not uncommon in Scotland, the combined effect of CSOs in a catchment can have a negative impact on the water quality. To minimise the impact of combined sewer overflows on water quality, SEPA imposes conditions requiring sewage litter and debris removal and on the location and frequency of their operation. SEPA continues to work closely with the Scottish Government, Scottish Water and the Water Industry to ensure that planned capital investment programmes aimed at upgrading sewerage infrastructure throughout the country are prioritised to maximise environmental benefits.