

# Excavation company let sediment into water

Press release

A Warwickshire excavation company allowed sediment from a quarry to enter freshwaters in Buckinghamshire.



Sediment in the water of a tributary of Padbury Brook.

AT Contracting and Plant Hire Limited allowed water contaminated with sediment to enter a tributary of Padbury Brook near Barton Hartshorn in May 2018.

As a result, the company has paid £15,000 to the [Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust](#).

The sanction is known as an Enforcement Undertaking. It can be used as an alternative to a prosecution where the offending was unintentional and where the harm to the environment is limited. In this case the [Environment Agency](#) accepted the company's negligence wasn't down to dangerous or foolhardy behaviour.

The Environment Agency was satisfied that AT Contracting had worked quickly to solve the issue and taken full responsibility for the incident.

Enforcement undertakings allow companies and individuals to make good some of the environmental damage they cause, including through a financial contribution to an environmental project. In addition to the £15,000 payment, the company completed a number of other actions. This included stopping the discharge, removing the pollutant from the watercourse and improving water management.

While agreeing to enforcement undertakings, the Environment Agency continues to prosecute organisations and individuals where evidence shows high levels of culpability and serious environment harm.

Andrew Raine, Environment Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

The Environment Agency is an outcome-focussed regulator, seeking to make sure all businesses work within environmental laws.

Human error on the part of AT Contracting led to the sediment being allowed to enter the river.

Following the Environment Agency's intervention, AT Contracting worked quickly to contain the incident. It has since worked to improve its water management systems to prevent this from happening again in the future.

Members of the public with concerns about pollution should contact the Environment Agency's 24-hour incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Published 26 July 2022