

Regulating the waste industry during the coronavirus pandemic

Press release

The Environment Agency is continuing to protect people and the environment during coronavirus (COVID-19).



Remote ways of working have been used to carry out checks of permitted waste sites throughout the Midlands

It is using technology to carry out its role as an effective regulator where face-to-face visits are restricted due to government guidelines.

Whilst regulatory visits to sites that could cause serious environmental harm are continuing in the pandemic, in certain instances the organisation has carried out virtual inspections of permitted waste sites to check they are complying with regulations.

Using online services such as Zoom, checking CCTV video footage and requesting specific evidence to prove the sites are storing waste correctly, the Environment Agency has been successfully carrying out its inspections.

These remote ways of working have been used to carry out checks of permitted waste sites throughout the Midlands, including Tom White Waste, which has 3 permits for its two sites in Coventry.

David Hudson, Area Environment Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

We've been able to innovate and use technology to continue to regulate throughout this pandemic. Working remotely, we have received all of the necessary paperwork and photographs from Tom White Waste and carried out a meeting with them on Zoom, which included a site tour via their real time CCTV, to check their sites comply with the regulations of their permits. In this case we were satisfied the company has shown good practice and complied with the

regulations.

Coronavirus is not an excuse to operate illegally. We are continuing to work closely with businesses and industry to help them meet their legal requirements and we are continuing to enforce regulatory requirements, while following the government's guidance on social distancing.

We make clear in our approach to regulation and enforcement that we expect operators to take all reasonable steps to comply with regulatory requirements using contingency plans to help them comply.

Businesses and householders should carry out checks to ensure that they are using legitimate companies to deal with their waste. To check if a waste carrier is genuine visit the Environment Agency's [public register](#).

Anyone who suspects a company is operating illegally can call the Environment Agency 24/7 on 0800 80 70 60 or report it anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Notes to editors

Published 28 May 2020