

Press release: Rogue recycler found guilty for mattress mountain

The operator of a waste mattress and bed recycling site in Smarden has been found guilty for failing to comply with relevant waste exemptions as well as failing to comply with an Enforcement Notice issued by the Environment Agency. Sentencing is due on 3 February 2017.

The charges were brought against Mr Lewis Bertram, trading as Eco Matters, Units Y & E2 Smarden Business Estate, Smarden, Ashford, Kent after an Environment Agency investigation discovered that he was operating outside of the terms of registered waste exemptions, posing a pollution and fire risk to the surrounding environment, neighbouring units and residential properties. Mr Bertram pleaded not guilty to the charges presented at Magistrates court early in 2016 and elected for the case to be heard at Crown Court. The jury returned guilty pleas to all three charges brought before the court.

Mr Bertram had been operating a mattress recycling business at the two units, which lie within close proximity to several residential properties, since July 2013. Environment Agency visits in December 2014 and January 2015 found that the activities were not compliant with the terms of the registered waste exemptions. Environment officers informed Mr Bertram that he was committing an offence by operating the site outside of the terms of these waste exemptions and gave Mr Bertram the opportunity to comply with the specific conditions and relevant objectives in the first instance.

Further visits to monitor the situation on site in March and early April 2015 revealed that activities on site were continuing to be conducted outside of the terms of the exemptions and the volume of waste stored on site continued to increase. The Environment Agency de-registered the waste exemptions and Enforcement Notices were issued on Mr Bertram in March 2015 instructing that all waste be removed from Unit E2 and the volume of waste at Unit Y to be reduced to the 1,000 tonne limit of textiles permitted for storage under the waste exemptions by 29 May 2015.

Mr Bertram maintained a not guilty plea in relation to the non-compliance with these two notices to clear the waste for which the charges will be referred back to a magistrate's court.

No further waste had been brought to site by Mr Bertram since the de-registration of the exemptions in May 2015. However, further visits to the site conducted by environment officers in June 2015 revealed that Mr Bertram had not complied with the Enforcement Notices requesting for the removal of waste from site.

The Environment Agency worked closely with Kent Fire and Rescue Service throughout 2015 and 2016 to monitor the fire risk posed by the site and to ensure that the situation on site did not get any worse.

The site at Units Y and E2 are still full of waste mattresses, divan bed bases and their associated parts which we will continue to deal with to ensure that they are removed by those responsible.

Alan Cansdale, Environment Manager from the Environment Agency said:

His actions showed blatant disregard for local residents and businesses putting the environment and local amenity at risk. Mr Bertram ignored numerous opportunities given to him by our officers to bring the operations back into compliance.

Waste exemptions are designed for activities deemed to be of low risk to the environment and have strict conditions that must be complied with.

While we will work closely with businesses to help them comply with such legislation, in cases where individuals consistently operate illegally and in this case outside the terms of an exemption, we have no hesitation in prosecuting them to make sure that waste crime doesn't pay.

There are photos available on our [flickr account](#)

Press release: Waste site operation to protect workers and the environment

The Environment Agency has joined forces with the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) in the North East to carry out combined visits to check waste sites aren't flouting important legislation.

This ongoing multi-agency approach aims to improve working practices on regulated sites.

During the last series of visits at the back end of 2016, staff attended 13 sites across the region, with more visits proposed for the early part of the New Year.

To date the joint initiative has focused on sites that recycle, process or store waste metal, such as scrap vehicles and general waste metal. Operators use a variety of processes and equipment to strip, cut and burn waste to extract the key metal and components, work which has the potential to expose workers to risks to health and safety.

The aim of these visits is two-fold; to make sure the sites are operating within the conditions of their Environmental Permit to protect the

environment and community, while ensuring the health and safety of workers isn't put at risk.

The Environment Agency's Ruth Tyson, Waste Team Leader, said:

We manage our permitted sites every single day to ensure they are operating within the law, to protect the environment and to minimise impact on the local community.

Health and safety is paramount when our officers are visiting sites and officers regularly contact HSE if they feel a site is unsafe.

These joint operations are a really good opportunity to share knowledge with other agencies and mean we look at the site from different perspectives, ensuring any issues impacting on the environment and community can be looked at together with site safety.

Inspector Victoria Wise from the Health and Safety Executive added:

An average of 7 people are killed each year in the waste industry, this includes members of the public. The main causes of death are people being run over or struck by a moving vehicle or something unstable collapsing on them.

A high number of workers in this industry are also exposed to processes that cause irreversible ill health conditions. During the last joint initiative HSE found 8 sites visited to be in significant contravention of health and safety law with 7 Enforcement Notices served.

Joint operations such as this mean we can work alongside the Environment Agency to make sure those responsible for the sites are not exposing workers, members of the public and the environment to harm from the operations they undertake.

[Notice: TR21 0JY, Council of the Isles of Scilly: environmental permit issued](#)

The Environment Agency publish surrenders that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the surrender letter, decision document and site

condition report evaluation template for:

- Operator name: Council of the Isles of Scilly
 - Installation name: Porthmellon Waste Management Site
 - Permit number: EPR/TP3732SE/S004
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[News story: Air pollution advice to the public](#)

Updated: Air pollution advice updated for 24 January.

Widespread moderate [air pollution](#) is currently being measured across many parts of the UK today (24 January) due to still and foggy weather conditions, with some areas of high pollution across southeast England, very high pollution in London and isolated pockets of very high across eastern England.

High levels are expected across southeast England and some very high levels in London and the east of England. Moderate levels are being measured in south Wales, South West England, the East and West Midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside and Northwest England. Air pollution is expected to remain low across Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Current air pollution levels are due to the continuing high pressure and associated light winds across the UK.

During periods of high air pollution adults and children with lung problems, and adults with heart problems, should reduce strenuous physical exertion, particularly outdoors, and particularly if they experience symptoms. People with asthma may find they need to use their reliever inhaler more often. Older people should also reduce physical exertion.

Anyone experiencing discomfort such as sore eyes, cough or sore throat should consider reducing activity, particularly outdoors.

For those parts of the country forecast to have very high levels of ambient air pollution, Public Health England is advising people to reduce physical exertion, particularly when outdoors and especially if they experience symptoms such as a cough or sore throat. Adults and children with lung problems, adults with heart problems, and older people, in areas where very high levels are recorded should avoid strenuous physical activity. People with asthma may find they need to use their reliever inhaler more often.

Light winds and foggy conditions are expected to continue through Tuesday (24 January), especially across southern and eastern parts. This will lead to the ongoing risk of areas of moderate air pollution levels, along with isolated pockets of high levels. Meanwhile across the north and west increasing winds

should lead to air pollution returning to low levels from Wednesday (25 January).

These low levels are expected to spread to all parts during Thursday (26 January) and Friday (27 January) as stronger winds extend east across the UK.

For the latest forecasts and health advice, please visit [Defra's UK Air website](#). Alerts for high levels of air pollution are also issued by Defra via the Air UK Twitter account [@DefraUKAir](#).

Further information:

- The 5-day forecast of predicted air pollution levels is continually updated on the UK Air website, with advice from Public Health England to allow members of the public, particularly those who are most likely to be affected by air pollution, to take action.
- We also work with health charities to make sure vulnerable people are aware of any periods of low air quality.

[News story: Marine plan development workshops announced](#)

The Marine Management Organisation has announced a new series of marine planning workshops for the north east, north west, south east and south west marine plan areas.

The workshops are part of the next step in the development of the marine plans, which will formally start in February 2017, with the launch of a questionnaire.

This is an important stage in the first year of marine planning for these marine plan areas, providing the opportunity to see how the issues and evidence gathered as part of last summer's call are being taken forward.

The workshops will discuss the issues and evidence database in more detail and examine what policies are needed to address the economic, social, environmental and governance issues in each marine plan area. The workshops will discuss potential policies in greater detail, feeding into the process for the next stage of plan development.

In addition the workshops will review the proposed new format for the marine plans, which is more interactive, linking to our Marine Information System (MIS), and understand more about how stakeholders expect to use the marine plans.

The workshops will be taking place in February and March at the following locations and times:

[North east marine plan area](#)

- Scarborough: Wednesday 15 February 2017, Crown Spa Hotel, 9.30am to 4pm
- Newcastle: Thursday 16 February 2017, Centre for Life, 9.30am to 4pm

[North west marine plan area](#)

- Blackpool: Tuesday 28 February 2017, Hilton Hotel, 9.30am to 4pm
- Carlisle: Wednesday 1 March 2017, Hallmark Hotel, 9.30am to 4pm

[South east marine plan area](#)

- London: Tuesday 7 March 2017, The Wesley Hotel and Conference Venue, Euston House, 9.30am to 4pm
- Colchester: Wednesday 8 March 2017, Rose and Crown Hotel, 9.30am to 4pm

[South west marine plan area](#)

- Falmouth: Tuesday 21 March 2017, National Maritime Museum, 9.30 am to 4pm
- Plymouth: Wednesday 22 March 2017, Future Inn, 9.30am to 4pm
- Taunton: Thursday 23 March 2017, Holiday Inn, 9.30am to 4pm

Tickets for the workshops are available via [Eventbrite](#). An agenda will be available in early February.

Evening drop-in sessions

We will also be holding two evening drop in sessions in the north east and south west for those who can't attend these area's workshops:

- Amble: Monday 13 February 2017, Amble Development Trust, 5 to 7pm
- Falmouth: Monday 20 March 2017, National Maritime Museum, 5 to 7pm

These events will include a presentation on the north east and south west marine plan areas respectively, which will run at 5pm and 6pm.