

January's the perfect time to sign up to North East coast flood warning service

✘ 25 January 2019

Nearly half of all flooding events along Scotland's North East coast have historically taken place in January, according to recent analysis for the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

SEPA is urging homeowners and businesses in the North East to be prepared for flooding by signing up to Floodline, which provides a free 24/7 flood warning service across Scotland.

A new flood warning scheme for Scotland's North East coast went live in September 2018, adding eight new flood warning areas to SEPA's Floodline service. These are:

- Inverallochy to St Coombs
- St Fergus Gas Terminal
- Peterhead to Boddam
- Port Errol to Newburgh
- Aberdeen Coastal
- Stonehaven
- Inverbervie to Tangleha
- Montrose

The scheme, developed in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council and Angus Council, gives communities and businesses time to take action to reduce the damage and disruption that flooding can cause.

Vincent Fitzsimons, Head of Hydrology and Flooding Services at SEPA, said: "Being flooded can be a life-changing event, and with so many homes and businesses along Scotland's North East at risk of flooding, it's vital to be prepared. It may not be stormy right now, but many previous coastal flood events happened in January, so signing up to this free service is an easy new year's resolution to get done if you drive through, live or work in flood risk areas.

"Our new coastal flood warning scheme will be particularly relevant to 2,029 properties at risk of flooding along the North East coast and will cover 125km of coastline from Inverallochy to Montrose. That means we'll be offering a more localised flood warning service to another 17 communities. This improved service for coastal communities between Firth of Forth and Tay and the Moray Firth, means the whole of the east coast of Scotland is now covered by flood warnings."

Mairi Gougeon, Scottish Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural

Environment, said:

“The Scottish Government has committed £420 million over 10 years to protect homes in many of Scotland’s most flood-prone communities. This new coastal flood warning scheme for the North East of Scotland is a key part of this work and will play a vital role in helping to alert local communities to flooding.”

SEPA’s [Flood Warning Development Framework](#) makes a number of strategic commitments to reduce the impact of flooding by improving the provision of reliable and timely flood warning. One of these was to establish a flood warning scheme across coastal areas of the North East of Scotland.

As Scotland’s national authority for flood forecasting and warning, SEPA operates Floodline as a 24-hour flood forecasting and warning service to inform first responders, local authorities and emergency services of emerging flood events and the potential impact on local communities and critical infrastructure.

Hundreds of regional Flood Alerts and local Flood Warnings get issued every year and over 27,000 customers nationwide opt to receive these directly, with many thousands more accessing them online.

The new warning areas for the North East coast were launched alongside a further 11 flood warning schemes for Orkney. Together, these represent a significant investment and enhancement of Scotland’s overall resilience to the impact of climate change and extreme weather.

You can always check if your community is within a flood risk area by checking SEPA’s online flood maps, but this can’t provide property level information. <http://map.sepa.org.uk/floodmap/map.htm>

[Scottish business urged to have it’s say on SEPA’s next nine sector plans](#)

 23 January 2019

Scottish businesses across agriculture, manufacturing and infrastructure are being urged to have their say on nine ‘sector plans’ currently out for consultation by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

- Scottish business urged to have its say on SEPA’s next nine sector plans.
- Plans remain open for consultation across agriculture, manufacturing and infrastructure.
- 16 sector plans will be launched this year in line with the regulator’s

One Planet Prosperity strategy.

In response to mounting scientific evidence about climate change, environmental impact and resource scarcity, the sector plans set out a range of actions to help all regulated businesses meet – and go beyond – their compliance obligations.

The sector plans set out how SEPA will ensure all businesses comply with environmental laws. They also set out series of ‘beyond compliance’ goals to help organisations recognise the economic opportunity of sustainable business models by reducing the amount of materials, energy and water used across the sectors, promote innovation and reduce overall impact.

“We are transforming our regulatory approach in order to create a world-class environment protection agency fit for the challenges of tomorrow, and sector planning will drive this new approach. Our regulatory delivery will shift from working in the different regulatory regimes to being grounded in working across whole sectors,” says SEPA Chief Executive Terry A’Hearn.

“Full compliance with environmental regulations will not, by itself deliver the transformational change required to secure our One Planet Prosperity objectives,” Mr A’Hearn adds. “Our sector plans need to unlock the potential for businesses to gain strengths in resource efficiency and environmental innovation that will help them to succeed in their markets.”

The nine plans, which opened for consultation on 21st December and close on 15th February are:

- Chemicals manufacturing
- Crop production
- Dairy processing
- Dairy production
- Housing
- Leather
- Nuclear power generation and decommissioning
- Strategic infrastructure (transport and utilities)
- Water supply and waste water

Getting feedback from our communities, partners and stakeholders is important and your feedback is critical to the success of our sector planning approach. Everyone with an interest in the environment and involved in these sectors is encouraged to visit our dedicated sector webpage, sectors.sepa.org.uk.

Dairy and crops

Dairy production is an important sector for Scotland and dairy processing turns Scottish farm produce into products that are sold in domestic and export markets. Alongside crops, these sector plans focus on the agricultural and land management community and their supply chains.

Tackling the compliance issues across the sectors, the key areas being diffuse pollution, the plans set out a series of actions which SEPA will

progress including understanding the causes pathways of diffuse pollution and applying increasing scrutiny, prescription, fees and the use of enforcement and monetary penalties for those who fail to comply.

Opportunities for beyond compliance activities that would benefit the sectors and the environment will also be realised through implanting the plans and SEPA working with the sector to use improved technologies that increase precision and drive efficiencies and sharing best practice and techniques by working with partners and industry bodies to develop guidance and facilitate stakeholder engagement.

Strategic infrastructure, housing, water and nuclear

These plans will support a Scotland that is well connected, resilient and successful. Encouraging investment in innovation that leads to modern infrastructure a strong economy is built on while ensuring that development is compliant with environmental legislation. With around 80% of Scotland's current *housing* stock planned to be in use by 2050, *delivering home improvements which use materials sourced from a responsible supply chain and which improve environmental performance* will be key.

Across the strategic infrastructure (transport and utilities), housing, water supply and waste water the management of waste is a common area of non-compliance and this plan sets out how SEPA will tackle this, and other compliance issues. The agency recognises that to achieve beyond compliance behaviour success will come from working closely with the other regulators and agencies in these sectors and harnessing the influence it has in the boardroom as well as day to day regulation.

SEPA regulates the nuclear power generation and decommissioning sector for its radioactive substances activities involving the management of radioactive waste. Nuclear power continues to play a key role in providing low-carbon energy. The sector has a good record of compliance across all the regimes SEPA regulates it under, and in 2017 achieved 100% compliance. SEPA commits in the plan to continue to have experienced staff to continue to regulate the sector and support continued high levels of compliance.

Manufacturing

The chemicals manufacturing plans focuses on chemical and biochemical manufacturing in Scotland, from base chemical manufacture to the formulation and packaging of final products. The operation and development of chemicals manufacturing sites within larger industrial complexes, close to communities, needs to be managed so as not to harm those communities. Key issues contributing to non-compliance in 2017 were due to noise issues associated with unplanned flaring events, and associated operation and maintenance of plant due to noise and vibration issues.

Although the sector is broadly compliant, due to the nature of operations, potential impacts of any compliance issues are significant. SEPA is determined to assist the Scottish chemicals manufacturing sector to be a world-leader in producing products that serve the needs of society in ways

that further drive down environment impact that also negatively impacts the communities around sites.

The leather plan also focuses on the manufacturing sector of our economy and builds innovative processes that the Scottish leather sector has already developed. It aims to improve environmental performance throughout the supply chain. Through investment activities, the sector has almost achieved excellent at all sites so the sector plan focused on unlocking beyond compliance behaviours that will realise the benefits of the circular economy and low resource use,

Beyond compliance will be sought through the use of materials, transport, energy, air quality, water use and social responsibility.

ENDS.

Sector plans

SEPA is changing today, creating a world-class environment protection agency fit for the challenges of tomorrow. By moving away from the traditional site by site regulation to grounding our regulation and activities across whole sectors, we will shape our interactions with every sector and the businesses in them.

Sector plans will be at the heart of everything we do and will help regulated businesses operate successfully within the means of one planet. In every sector we regulate, we will have two simple aims.

We will ensure that:

- every regulated business fully meets their compliance obligations
- as many regulated businesses as possible will go beyond the compliance standards.

Scotch Whisky was one of three sector plans consulted on in 2018 and is the first to be launched. A draft sector plan for tyres and oil and gas decommissioning will also soon be launched for consultation.

SEPA has launched a new, dedicated space on its website for sector plans <https://sectors.sepa.org.uk>

[Vision to revitalise River Leven communities secures major investment](#)

 21 January 2019

A project to revitalise the River Leven in Fife as a great regional asset has

received more than £300,000 in funding.

One of the first initiatives of The Leven Catchment Project has been awarded £250,000 through Sustrans Scotland's Community Links scheme and £65,000 from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency's Water Environment Fund.

The funding from Sustrans and SEPA will finance feasibility and scoping work, starting this month, for the 'Connectivity Project'. This is one of a series of smaller initiatives designed to help deliver the wider vision for the region and focuses on a 5km stretch of the river Leven at Levenmouth.

Plans include developing a series of paths to connect the isolated communities to and along the river, and unlocking opportunities on vacant and derelict land in the area.

"The River Leven catchment in mid Fife was historically home to several hundred mills and factories, with a proud population of miners and workers in manufacturing industries," explains SEPA water specialist Pauline Silverman.

"But there are serious environmental challenges in the area and the river has become a barrier between communities – disconnecting people and towns from each other. The purpose of the Leven Catchment Project is to achieve environmental improvements whilst working with key partners and communities to maximise social and economic opportunities."

Key partners in the project with SEPA so far are Fife Council, Forth Rivers Trust, Scottish Natural Heritage, Sustrans, Fife College and Scottish Water.

By 2030, the partners' goals include the region becoming a 'go to' destination and tourism becoming one of the region's key economic contributors. The vision also includes the River Leven catchment being a dynamic hub for social enterprise, youth and education, and the region having a natural environment that will support a diverse ecology and celebrate its social history.

Reconnecting people and place is a key focus of the initiative, and plans involve developing a wide range of linkages along the River Leven between the catchment communities, Loch Leven – where the river originates – and the coast.

Community Links is funded by the Scottish Government and delivered by Sustrans Scotland, the sustainable transport charity, in partnership with local authorities, statutory bodies and educational institutions for the creation of cycle network infrastructure for everyday journeys. Since 2010, the programme has funded more than 500 projects across Scotland.

Karen Ridgewell, Project Coordinator for Sustrans Scotland, said "We are very pleased to be working with SEPA and the other partners in the Leven Catchment Project to develop new links between the many communities in the area. We look forward to engaging with the local communities to help make new paths and spaces for walking, cycling, scootering and wheeling."

SEPA's remit includes improving or removing environmental pressures,

including barriers to fish migration, water quality issues and physical modifications to the rivers.

The Water Environment Fund is an annual grant provided by the Scottish Government and administered by SEPA to improve the physical condition of water environments that have been damaged by historical activities. This includes financial support for removing or reducing the impact of redundant structures that are barriers to fish migration, and projects to restore natural river shape and function.

Cllr Ross Vettraino, Convener – Environment, Protective Services & Community Safety Committee at Fife Council, said: “Fife Council is delighted to be a partner on The River Leven connectivity project. This large partner project offers the Levenmouth valley area a great opportunity for positive change. Working together, we will pool resources and skills to ensure this project puts local people and the environment at its heart and that the benefits are long term.

“This feasibility stage, which looks to see how we can restore the river, create a river park with amenities and a path network that links everyone in the area, is very exciting. I look forward to seeing the opportunities offered by this stage of the project and being involved in the design and engagement programme with the local communities this summer.”

Rhona McInroy, Forth Operations Manager at Scottish Natural Heritage, said: “We are proud to be part of this exciting project and look forward to working with our partners and the communities of Levenmouth to enhance the fabulous natural assets of the River Leven and surrounding area.”

Alison Baker, Director of the Forth Rivers Trust said: “The River Leven is a ribbon of life through the heart of the Levenmouth area and we are delighted to be involved in this work to improve it and the wildlife it supports, for the enjoyment and benefit of local communities and people. Linking the river to local neighbourhoods will provide access for day to day use and will inspire recreational and enterprising use of the river corridor once again.”

John Wincott, Environmental Services Coordinator at Fife College, said: “Fife College is delighted to be a partner in this venture, which is enabling our talented students to make use of their creative skills in a live project which benefits the environment and the local community.

“Our students’ skills are wide ranging, from creative arts and video production to aerial surveying and graphic design. Those involved so far have thoroughly enjoyed the experience – many of our students, from the wider College community, live in and around the Levenmouth area, which makes the experience even more relevant.

“This is an excellent example of partnership working where a range of organisations bring a different mix of skills and knowledge together to form exciting results. We very much look forward to being involved in further stages of this very worthwhile project.”

A Scottish Water spokeswoman said: “We are currently putting the finishing touches to a new £4 million sewer pipe to help protect the environment for the long-term in the River Leven. The 190-metre-long pipe goes into Levenmouth waste water treatment works – which serves a quarter of a million people in Fife. We are delighted to support this project to enhance and improve access to the natural assets in the area.”

ENDS

[Scotland's dry cleaning sector improves its environmental performance](#)

✘16 January 2019

Dry cleaners in Scotland are improving their environmental performance following the introduction of fixed monetary penalties by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

SEPA served £600 fixed monetary penalties on two dry cleaner operators for failure to submit annual solvent emission data as required by their permit.

“Dry Cleaners use solvent as the cleaning medium in their process and, as such, are required to hold a permit to operate,” explains SEPA Environmental Protection Officer Peter Semple. “The solvent used can be harmful to both human health and the environment, with the UK reporting the amount used to the EU. There is a solvent emission limit set in the permit and each operator is required to submit a data return each year to show if they have complied with the limit or not.”

Historically, many operators did not submit the data, with fewer than 80% doing so in 2012.

In response, SEPA adopted a sector-based approach for the regulation of dry cleaners, moving to a national team with one dedicated staff member. This meant more time and effort could be spent supporting the dry cleaning sector. As a result, the number of operators submitting the required data rose to around 90% over the next few years.

SEPA is changing the way it regulates and since 2015, new legal powers have allowed the agency to issue fines for non-compliance as fixed monetary penalties. These have proven effective in changing behaviour and deterring those who damage the environment and undermine legitimate businesses.

“SEPA is clear that compliance with environmental legislation is non-negotiable,” Semple says.

“We’ve spent considerable time and effort engaging with the dry cleaning sector, offering advice and guidance. All operators were advised that they could face a fixed monetary penalty for non-submission of 2017 data. This was also discussed with some local councils, dry cleaning consultants, machine distributors and service engineers, in line with SEPA’s focus on business engagement.”

The number of operators submitting their data return subsequently increased to around 95% in 2017, with just seven failing to do so. Two of these had mitigating circumstances whilst a further three had legal issues with their permit, which have now been resolved. Fixed monetary penalties of £600 each were served on the remaining two operators for failure to submit the required data return.

Advice and guidance for dry cleaners, including [weekly](#) and [annual](#) data sheets which operators can use to record their data, and the [dry cleaner standard rules](#), which all dry cleaners must comply with, can be found on the [SEPA website](#).

Ends

[Greenhouse gases from Scottish industry at a 10 year low](#)

 07 January 2019

Greenhouse gases emitted by Scottish industry continue to fall, according to the latest annual mass pollutant releases published by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

The figures, published online in the 2017 [Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory \(SPRI\)](#), show how the pollutants emitted by Scottish regulated businesses are changing as the country continues to move to a more sustainable, resource efficient Scotland.

We place pressures on the Scottish environment in our daily lives, from dealing with our sewage and waste to the demand for goods like petrol, plastics, food and drink. Scottish industry also puts pressures on the environment through emissions to the air and water environment and through waste management activities.

GHG levels have reduced 57% since 2007 when 26 Megatonnes (Mt) of pollutants were released. The 2017 total was 11 Mt. The largest drop came in 2016, as Longannet power station was only operational for the first few months of the year. There was a further reduction of 6% (just under 1 Mt) in 2017 as the first full year with no emissions from the plant.

	2007	2016	2017	Difference	
	Emissions (kg)	Emissions (kg)	Emissions (kg)	2007-2017	2016-2017
Carbon dioxide	26,549,962,881	12,124,897,286	11,371,844,762	down 57%	down 6%
Methane	70,774,750	34,751,851	32,430,019	down 54%	down 6%
Nitrous oxide	296,291	125,831	89,467	down 69%	down 28%
Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)	1,621	1,734	1,048	down 35%	down 39%
Perfluorocarbons (PFCs)	7,328	4,510	4,355	down 40%	down 3%
Sulphur hexafluoride	574	127	133	down 76%	up 5%
Total	26,621,043,445	12,159,781,339	11,404,369,784	down 57%	down 6%

Generally most pollutants decreased in 2017 from 2016 values or stayed marginally the same and the longer term trends mostly remain downward. Increases are mostly related to an increase in production or variations in combustion fuels. There were also 16 more sites reporting in 2017.

From climate change to the circular economy, Scotland is driving globally ambitious, internationally recognised policy with a purpose. It's policy that recognises the economic, as well as environmental, opportunity of a more sustainable, resource efficient Scotland.

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

"The most successful countries in the 21st century will function within our planet's means to support us. Through our regulatory strategy, One Plant Prosperity, SEPA is helping business grow sustainably while reducing their environmental burden.

"Whilst it's encouraging to see greenhouse gases from Scottish industry at a ten year low, we recognise further progress needs to be made. The data that SPRI holds is vital to helping us understand how these changes are impacting on our environment both directly and indirectly, ensuring Scotland can identify priority areas to reduce releases and track progress."

SPRI is a searchable database of annual mass releases of specified pollutants to air, water and land from SEPA regulated industrial sites. It also provides information about off-site transfers of waste from these sites. It does not assess the compliance of the facilities or the health and environmental impact of the releases. Site compliance can be found in [SEPA's Compliance Assessment Scheme results](#).

Annual changes

Year-to-year changes in pollutants can often be attributed to changes at a few sites, due to increases or decreases in production, changing source products and new sites opening.

All pollutants have a reporting threshold, below which sites do not need to report to SPRI. An increase in production can move a site's releases above the threshold, showing a large increase.

Ends

Notes to editors

The SPRI data can be accessed on Scotland's Environment web at www.environment.gov.scot/data/data-analysis/scottish-pollution-release-inventory/

- There were 1,237 reporting sites in 2017, compared to 1,221 in 2016.
- Since 1993, owners or operators of facilities that have met the SPRI reporting requirements have reported on an annual basis. Data from SPRI data is used to fulfil the reporting requirements of the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (E-PRTR).
- Using the tool to compare facilities or sectors provides a general overview of the total amounts of pollutants released or waste transferred. However, direct and causal inferences should not be made because detailed knowledge of processes, installed abatement technologies and other installed emission reduction technologies and practices must be known before this type of analyses can be accurately and definitively performed. Further, the types and amounts of source material, management methods, production patterns, etc. must also be known.