

## **News story: National Drought Group – Chairman’s Statement – September 2018**

The NDG convened on Thursday 20 September to assess the present situation and review the action being taken to reduce the risk of drought in 2019.

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## **Press release: Grass greener, but rain needed to reduce drought-risk for 2019**

More than 300 dry-weather environmental incidents in summer 2018

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## **Press release: Environment Agency and Fire Service team up to tackle emergencies**

The Environment Agency and the Fire & Rescue Service are rolling out new equipment which could save lives, land and property across the country from flooding by connecting fire service hoses to the EA’s high-volume trailer mounted pumps.

The two organisations have developed a ‘hose coupling adaptor’ which will give the Environment Agency access to over 150,000 metres of hose stored by the Fire & Rescue Service at locations around the country. This will enable the Environment Agency to get pumps to the communities that need them most, more quickly in a flood.

The new kit, developed between the Environment Agency Northumberland, Durham and Tees Field Team and the County Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service will benefit communities by providing access to high-volume pumps which can move as much as 7,000 litres of water per minute and can pump over a distance of 3 kilometres.

The adaptor has already been put to good use in tackling the large protracted wildfire on Saddleworth Moor, Greater Manchester during, the hot, dry summer. It is now being rolled out nationally and will play a major role in the Environment Agency’s preparations for winter flooding.

Caroline Douglass, Director of Incident Management & Resilience, Environment Agency said:

As an emergency responder, the Environment Agency attends many incidents alongside the Fire & Rescue Service and this innovation is another great example of us working together to provide greater safety for communities across the country.

With winter around the corner, we have 6,500 staff trained to respond to flooding and this new kit will form an important part of our preparation.

Chris Lowther, Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council Operations Coordination Committee, said:

This new equipment is a result of excellent collaboration between the Environment Agency and the Fire & Rescue Service, which means we will be better placed to tackle flooding.

We are committed to working alongside other blue light services and partners to ensure the best possible response is delivered to communities when they are affected by flooding. Being able to mobilise assets from across the country quickly is an essential part of our national resilience response, meaning the public can have confidence that the emergency services can and will respond quickly when needed.

The Environment Agency continues to use new technology to prepare for and respond to floods, including investment in 40km of temporary flood barriers and 250 high volume pumps. The Environment Agency also has 6,500 trained staff across the country ready to respond to flooding, including 500 flood support officers.

The Environment Agency provides year-round advice to residents and businesses on how to protect themselves, their property and possessions against flooding. To check your flood risk, prepare for flooding and sign up for free flood warnings visit: [check your flood risk](#)

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# [Press release: Torcross nominated for international engineering award](#)

Torcross sea defence repair is one of 10 projects worldwide nominated for the Institution of Civil Engineers People's Choice Award 2018.

The award recognises top civil engineering projects and the winner is chosen by public vote. Anyone can vote – you can read about each of the 10 projects and vote on the [ICE Website](#). Voting closes on 28 September 2018.

The Environment Agency team based in Devon worked with contractors Bam Nuttall Mott Macdonald Joint Venture (BMM JV) to complete the £2.4m project within 14 months of problems being identified. The work was funded by Defra flood defence grant in aid.

The original seawall was constructed in the 1980s, protecting a row of properties along the seafront. Significant storms since 2014 had caused beach levels to drop, leaving the wall's foundations exposed. The winter storms of 2015/16 damaged the connecting road and caused movement in the wall and promenade. This indicated that the defence had been weakened and may no longer offer protection to adjacent properties.

The project had a tight deadline. The Environment Agency needed to identify the underlying issues with the wall and rectify them before the next winter storms arrived. The team faced a variety of challenges including tides encroaching into the working area, constrained access routes and a high risk of unexploded ordnance as Exercise Tiger – a live-fire training exercise for the D-Day landings – took place on the beach.

Environment Agency Project Manager Becky Richards said:

We would love Torcross to win this very prestigious industry award, but the competition is tough and we need votes to help us get to the top.

I'd like to thank all involved in getting us nominated, especially the local community who were really understanding throughout construction. Working with the tides meant long, noisy shifts. We couldn't have completed the project so quickly without the support of people in Torcross.

Voting for Torcross takes less than a minute and you could help a local project be recognised as the international top civil engineering project of the year. The winner of this year's People's Choice Award will be announced on 6 November 2018.

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## [Press release: Boaters reminded – register your vessel or pay the price](#)

- All were prosecuted for keeping their unregistered boats on the River Great Ouse
- They've been ordered to pay more than £6,500
- It brings the total of avoided registration charges recovered by the Agency to £129,000

Register your boat or face thousands of pounds in penalties – that's the message from the Environment Agency for boat owners flouting the law.

The warning comes as 7 boaters have been forced to forfeit more than £6,500 between them for failing to register their vessels for use on the River Great Ouse.

Boat owners are legally required to register any vessel they keep, use, or let for hire on Environment Agency waterways, and to clearly display a valid registration plate. Not doing so can result in penalties including fines and a criminal record.

Lee Eastwood, residing on the Lowena Dew moored at Downham Market, Paul Dale of Tunstall Terrace in Darlington, Darren Beacroft of Mason Gardens in Kings Lynn, Paul Danahar of Ramsey Road in St Ives, Trevor Hewitt of Railway Road in Downham Market, Terry Whitnall of Pitmansfield in Harlow, and Jessica Ibbotson of Spencer Road in Bedford have each been given 28 days to pay up.

The cases were proved at Cambridge Magistrates' Court on 23 August, except for Mr Eastwood's case which was proved at Kings Lynn on the same day, and Ms Ibbotson's case which was proved at Luton Magistrates' Court on 28 August.

Mr Eastwood was ordered to pay £608.79, Mr Dale £878.71, Mr Beacroft £472.49, Mr Danahar £978.98, Mr Whitnall £1,079.99, Ms Ibbotson £535.50, and Mr Hewitt – who owned 2 of the unregistered vessels – had to pay £1,990.99.

So far this year, the Environment Agency has recovered £129,000 in avoided registration charges – funds which are reinvested into maintaining, improving and protecting waterways.

Nathan Arnold, Waterways team leader at the Environment Agency, said:

Our waterways are part of our nation's rich heritage and beauty, and they contribute to our environment, our health and wellbeing, and our economy.

But boaters who break the law by not registering their boats are putting the future of these historic and precious waterways at risk

– so we won't hesitate to take action against them.

As well as not contributing their fair share towards the upkeep of waterways, unregistered boats can be unsafe, hazardous to other river users and a pollution risk to the local environment and wildlife.

The Environment Agency looks after 353 miles of navigable waterways in the Anglian network, which includes the Ancholme, Black Sluice, Glen, Welland, Nene, Great Ouse and Stour, as well as associated locks and navigation facilities like moorings, showers and toilets.

More information about boating and waterways, including registering vessels, is available from the [Environment Agency](#). If you suspect a boat is illegal, please contact the EA on 03708 506 506 or email [waterways.enforcementanglian@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:waterways.enforcementanglian@environment-agency.gov.uk).