

News story: New requirements for farmers to improve environment for all

New rules are now in force which will protect the water environment and save farmers money.

[The new rules](#), which came in to force on 2 April 2018, mean it is now mandatory for all farmers in England to maintain good practice to protect water quality and prevent water pollution incidents.

Collectively, farming related pollution incidents can harm wildlife in our rivers and seas. They also impact on our economy, resulting in higher bills from increased water treatment and affect our tourism and shellfish industry. Many farmers have already made great progress in addressing pollution risks but the new rules will help tackle water pollution by ensuring all farmers take action.

The rules will:

- promote good practice in managing fertilisers and manures;
- encourage land managers to take reasonable precautions to prevent diffuse pollution from runoff or soil erosion;
- require land managers to plan each application of manure or fertilisers, based on soil tests, to meet but not exceed crop and soil needs.

Our [25 Year Environment Plan](#) set out how these new rules will require every farmer to identify and manage risks to water and start taking precautions to reduce ammonia emissions, reducing pollution and soil erosion and improving resource efficiency.

Environment Minister Therese Coffey said:

This is a really important opportunity for farmers to reduce pollution in watercourses. In following these rules, farmers will be able to help reduce pollution incidents, improve water quality and save money through more efficient use of resources.

The new rules are an important part of our 25 year plan for the environment which will help us deliver our plans for a Green Brexit and leave our environment in a better state than we inherited it.

The new farming rules have been drawn up with farming and environment representatives so that they are practical, risk based and will prevent and reduce agricultural pollution. They encourage the farmer to think about the risk of water pollution, how to keep valuable topsoil on their fields and to apply fertilisers only when it is appropriate to do so. Farmers and land managers will be able to determine what approach is best for their land, through methods such as deciding when it is safe to spread fertilisers.

The rules cover:

- planning the use of manures and fertilisers to improve soil nutrient levels and meet crop needs;
- storing organic manures and positioning livestock feeders away from water bodies;
- applying manures or fertilisers to minimise impact on the water environment;
- precautions to prevent soil erosion;
- reducing livestock poaching.

Farming rules for water are part of a whole package of measures to help farmers and land managers look after the environment. The government is also investing £400 million through [Countryside Stewardship](#) which supports farmers in creating or restoring precious habitats and a £12 million farm ammonia reduction grant has incentivised farmers to tackle agricultural emissions.

Press release: Treacle Jug Farm waste operator stuck with £2,307 fine

The owner of Bradley Brothers Skip Hire (BBSH), a waste management business in Ferrensby near Harrogate, has been fined £2,307 and ordered to pay £4,000 costs and a £170 victim surcharge following a successful prosecution by the Environment Agency.

David Bradley (55) of Treacle Jug Farm, Ferrensby, North Yorkshire, was sentenced on 3 April at Harrogate Magistrates' Court having admitted to offences relating to the deliberate violation of an Environment Agency enforcement notice, the illegal operation of a waste management facility and failing to exercise duty of care in the transfer of controlled wastes.

The Environment Agency prosecuted after Bradley repeatedly and deliberately flouted his legal obligations over a 32 month period, beginning in February 2014 after officers discovered BBSH's Treacle Jug Farm site was in breach of its Environmental Permit conditions during a routine inspection.

The site was found to be full beyond its design capacity, leading to an inability to treat and process waste within the confines of a dedicated building as required by its Environmental Permit. Waste material had also been tipped in front of the entrance of the building and skips of waste were being stored outside and not on sealed drainage, representing an environmental risk of pollution and increasing the risk of amenity issues such as odours, pests and dust. Bradley was instructed to bring the site back into compliance, which he failed to do.

Bradley continually failed to comply with the requirements of his

Environmental Permit, ignoring the requirements of an enforcement notice to remove waste from the site. He also failed to provide an accurate record of the disposal of 223 separate consignments of waste, which is a criminal offence, and was unable to maintain his continuing competency to operate a waste facility, another breach of the site's Permit. BBSH even continued to accept waste into the Treacle Jug Farm site after its Permit was suspended and finally revoked.

An Environment Agency spokesperson said:

We had sought to work with Mr Bradley to help bring the site into compliance and provided a number of opportunities for corrective action to be taken. However, Mr Bradley failed to respond to our efforts and even illegally imported waste into the site once the company's permit to operate had been withdrawn.

The conditions of an Environmental Permit are designed to protect people and the environment. Failure to comply with these legal requirements is a serious offence that can damage the environment, undermine those who adhere to the rules and cause misery for local communities.

We hope the court's sentencing decision demonstrates the importance of companies adhering to environmental permitting rules.

In mitigation, Bradley said that he had made attempts to clear the waste but was under financial pressures due to outstanding debts.

Bradley was also ordered to pay £4,000 costs and £170 victim surcharge.

Press release: Derbyshire man reeled in for fishing without a licence

The Environment Agency is reminding anglers of the importance of having a rod licence, after a 48 year old Derbyshire man was ordered to pay over £500 in fines after being found guilty of fishing without a licence.

Nathan Hughes of Duffield Road, Little Eaton, was charged £523 after being found in breach of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act (1975) in January 2018.

The case heard at Northampton Magistrates Court was brought by the Environment Agency following the discovery of the offender on the River Soar at Kegworth.

Following the verdict, an Environment Agency spokesman said:

We are pleased with the outcome and hope that it will provide as a deterrent for any angler thinking of fishing without a licence. All the money raised from rod licence sales is used to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries, benefitting anglers and those cheating the system will feel the full extent of our legal powers.

Every year across the country, thousands of anglers are prosecuted for not having a fishing licence. As well as swindling other anglers, fishing illegally can carry a hefty penalty. Getting caught without a licence could land a fine of up to £2,500.

Any angler aged 12 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water needs a licence. An annual licence costs from just £30 (concessions available) and is available from www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence or by calling the Environment Agency on 0344 800 5386 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

Anyone with information about illegal fishing activities can contact the Environment Agency Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Press release: New powers to crack down on waste crime

- Environment Agency given new powers to tackle the problem of illegal waste sites.
- Powers include ability to lock up sites and force rogue operators to clean up all waste
- Body worn video cameras will be rolled out to all waste enforcement officers

New powers to tackle waste crime come into force today as the Environment Agency is given the authority to lock up illegal waste sites and block access in order to prevent tonnes of waste piling up and posing a risk to the environment.

The Environment Agency has also been granted the power to require rogue operators to clear all the waste at a problem waste site, not just the illegal waste. The changes are in response to a public consultation where 90% of respondents supported proposals for the regulator to take physical steps

to curb illegal waste activity.

As the fight against waste crime ramps up, the Environment Agency has also announced that its waste enforcement officers will be equipped with body worn video cameras on their visits to waste sites. The move follows a growing number of abusive incidents during site inspections.

The measures follow an extra £30 million of funding from the Government in November 2017 to tackle waste crime – an issue that drives business away from legitimate operators, blights communities and endangers the environment.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

These new powers will give the Environment Agency the tools they need to curb the rise of waste sites that continue to break the law and blight our communities.

Through our 25 year Environment plan we want to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we inherited it. As part of that commitment I am determined to crack down on these criminals and these new powers will be crucial in ending this criminal activity once and for all, backed up by £30 million of new money.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, said:

These are tough new sanctions against waste criminals and their unscrupulous activity which not only drains the economy but causes harm to the environment and damages livelihoods across the country. Last year, we closed down more than two illegal waste sites a day, and we're determined to keep going.

As we step up our fight against waste criminals, we also have a duty to protect our officers who put themselves in potentially hostile situations when they visit sites for inspections or to serve notices. The introduction of the bodycams provides an added deterrent as our officers do the important job of fighting waste crime.

The use of body cameras was first trialled by the Environment Agency in the north east. Footage captured on a bodycam was recently used to bring a conviction against an offender for the first time. The defendant was found guilty of wilfully obstructing the officers in the execution of their duty and using abusive behaviour towards two officers.

Paul Whitehill, Environment Agency waste officer said:

As a former police officer, I've seen routine visits rapidly

escalate into threatening, or sometimes even violent, situations. Sadly the same risks apply to the Environment Agency's officers.

We want to get on with our jobs without the threat of violence and the cameras will help to protect staff and bring obstructive individuals to justice.

In the financial year 16/17, the Environment Agency brought 138 prosecutions against businesses or individuals for waste crime offences, yielding more than £2m in fines.

For more information on the trial of the body video cameras, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environment-agency-trials-use-of-body-cameras>

For more information on the successful prosecution using body worn cameras, see our press release [here](#).

The responses to the 2015 public consultation on increasing EA powers are also available [online](#).

Press release: Easter crackdown on illegal fishing

They'll be out in force patrolling waters throughout the North East to make sure anglers are fishing in the right place, with the right tackle and equipment, and with a valid licence.

Easter and the upcoming Bank Holiday weekends are always popular for angling, and despite the unsettled weather forecast, there's no better time to get outdoors and enjoy some of the great fishing spots in the North East.

The Easter enforcement activity will be supported by the Angling Trust's Operation Clampdown – the annual blitz on illegal coarse fishing during the close season, which runs from 15 March to 15 June inclusive.

There are currently 464 Angling Trust Voluntary Bailiffs in England who are taking part in Operation Clampdown by keeping watch on their local rivers and reporting suspicious activity to the Environment Agency and police. There are 79 Voluntary Bailiffs in the North East and Yorkshire area.

Targeting known hotspots

Kevin Summerson, Fisheries Enforcement Technical Specialist at the Environment Agency, said:

The Environment Agency carries out enforcement work all year round. Our job is to protect fish stocks and improve fisheries, and anglers who fish legally rightly demand we take action to catch those who flout the law.

Our enforcement officers, working together with the police and supported by Angling Trust Voluntary Bailiffs, will be targeting illegal fishing this Easter weekend and anyone caught can expect to face prosecution.

Our work is intelligence-led, meaning we target known hotspots and act on reports of illegal fishing.

Looking for those flouting the law

During January alone the Environment Agency prosecuted 14 men in the North East for fishing without a rod licence, resulting in fines amounting to £3,749 and costs totalling £1,784. Kevin added:

This demonstrates just how seriously we take these offences. Whether it's fishing for coarse fish during close season, using illegal nets and other equipment, or fishing without a licence, our officers will be looking for those flouting the law. We urge people to help us protect the health of our fisheries by reporting suspected illegal fishing to us.

Anglers are reminded it is currently the close season for coarse fishing. This means fishing for coarse fish on rivers and streams is not permitted. This is done to help protect breeding fish, helping to safeguard stocks for the future. However, there are still plenty of places anglers can wet a line for coarse fish, including most stillwaters and canals.

You can check local fishing byelaws on [the gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk)

People are urged to report illegal fishing to the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 807060, or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

The rod licence is great value for money – a full annual licence costs just £30 with some short term and concessionary licences also available. [Buy your rod licence online.](#)