

## Press release: Stanford-le-Hope man fined over £7,000 for fly-tipping

A man has been ordered to pay more than £7,000 in fines, compensation and costs after he admitted leaving mixed commercial waste on land owned by Thurrock Council.

Billy Prince illegally dumped the waste at a compound located on land at Stanford Road, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex in May 2015.

The compound is used to store street cleaning and highways team equipment and is not an authorised waste collection facility or site permitted for authorised waste disposal.

On 11 May 2015, Prince used a vehicle owned by his employer to unlawfully deposit a quantity of mixed commercial waste at the compound.

CCTV showed a vehicle which was later found to have been driven by Prince depositing waste at the site.

There was a large yellow sign at the compound entrance that stated 'No Tipping'.

The Environment Agency investigated the incident and determined that the offending was deliberate and undermined legitimate waste management activities. The offending caused inconvenience to the council and clean-up costs.

Prince was sentenced at Chelmsford Magistrates' Court last week. The court heard Prince had pleaded guilty at the earliest opportunity and was 'very remorseful' of his actions, having lost his job as a result.

He was fined £2,000, ordered to pay compensation to Thurrock Council to the value of £3,970, costs of £1,105 and a victim surcharge of £120.

Environment Agency Enforcement Team Leader Lesley Robertson said she was pleased with the sentencing outcome, and it showed that the courts were taking such incidents seriously. She said:

A community order or custody, as well as a financial penalty, could have been imposed. As this was a single offence the penalty was reduced and the magistrates felt a financial penalty, which totalled more than £7,000, was appropriate.

This shows that even with a single fly tip the penalties are very high.

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## News story: 'Far too many serious pollution incidents' says Environment Agency water quality report

Environment Agency Chair, Emma Howard Boyd has called on water companies and farmers to cut the amount of pollution incidents harming England's waters and for penalties to be made tougher, as the EA publishes [The State of the Environment: Water Quality](#) report today.

Although the number of serious incidents has fallen by almost two thirds since 2001, the report reveals that 317 occurred in 2016. Agriculture is now the largest sector responsible for water pollution, while the number of serious incidents by water companies has remained at around 60 per year for the past decade – more than one a week.

The report shows that water quality has improved markedly over the last 30 years, following more than a century of poorly regulated industrial practices. England has the cleanest bathing waters since records began and rivers that were biologically dead are reviving. But there is more work to do to achieve the Environment Agency's ambition of a cleaner, healthier and better managed water environment

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

Water quality is better than at any time since the Industrial Revolution thanks to tougher regulation and years of hard work by the Environment Agency and others.

But there are still far too many serious pollution incidents which damage the local environment, threaten wildlife and, in the worst cases, put the public at risk.

I would like to see fines made proportionate to the turnover of the company and for the courts to apply these penalties consistently. Anything less is no deterrent.

The report reveals that the Environment Agency has taken more than 50 million samples to monitor water quality over the past 20 years. In 2016, 76% of the tests used to measure the health of rivers were rated good. However, only 14% of rivers reached good ecological status overall – this is because the failure of one test means the whole water body fails to obtain good or better status.

The most common reason for rivers not achieving good status was phosphorus,

which produces algae and depletes oxygen. More than half of rivers have been found to have unacceptable levels of phosphorus, caused by sewage effluent and pollutants from farmland.

The report also states that groundwaters have been deteriorating in quality over the last 60 years with only 53% achieving good chemical status in 2016.

Defra's [25-year environment plan](#) sets out a challenge to improve at least three quarters of waters so that they are close to their natural state. The report identifies population growth, climate change and plastic pollution as some of the potential threats to water quality in future.

It calls on businesses and the public to do more to protect the environment by disposing of household chemicals responsibly, not putting fats and oils down the drain, and minimising use of single-use plastics.

[Read the State of the Environment: Water Quality report](#)

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## **Press release: Illegal angler hooks £600 penalty**

Anglers are being urged to obey the law after a Lincolnshire man was ordered to pay more than £600 for fishing illegally.

Shaun Hammond, 28, of Mariners Arms Flats, Keadby, was caught fishing without a licence at Hibaldstow Bridge on the River Ancholme in October last year.

He was discovered by an Environment Agency enforcement officer carrying out a routine patrol to enforce the law and protect the environment for people and wildlife.

Hammond committed an additional offence by refusing to give his name and address to the officer.

Enforcement officers are considered in law to be the same as police constables. Obstructing one effectively doubled the amount Mr Hammond was fined.

Hammond was proved guilty in absence at Grimsby Magistrates' Court on 9 February. He was fined £440 – £220 for each offence – and ordered to pay costs of £127, as well as a victim surcharge of £44, bringing the total penalty to £611.

Caroline Tero, fisheries team leader at the Environment Agency, said:

Not only was Mr Hammond fishing illegally, he also obstructed a law

enforcement officer who was doing his duty to protect the environment for people and wildlife. We and the courts take this very seriously and will always look to protect the wellbeing of our officers.

It makes no sense to have the embarrassment of a court visit, a criminal conviction and a bill for potentially thousands of pounds when an annual licence is currently just £30. We hope this will make people think twice before picking up a rod illegally and if they don't, our officers are ready and waiting.

Steve Powell, Enforcement Once team manager for the Environment Agency, said:

The case acts as a reminder of the importance of having a fishing licence – and shows how seriously the courts take these offences. We hope the outcome will deter any angler who is thinking of fishing without a licence.

The yearly fishing licence Mr Hammond required would have cost just £30. Other types of licence are available, including one-day for £6, eight-day for £12, and a free one for those aged 12 to 16.

The money from licence sales supports fish, fisheries and fishing, and protects the future of angling. A small number of people refuse to buy one, cheating the sport and their fellow anglers.

For the minority who flout the rules, the most common offence is fishing without a valid licence, which could land them with a fine of up to £2,500 and a criminal record.

Last year in England, the Environment Agency checked more than 63,000 fishing licences and prosecuted 2,330 for rod and line offences, resulting in fines in excess of £335,000.

Any angler aged 12 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water needs a licence. They are available online via gov.uk or by calling the Environment Agency on 0344 800 5386.

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

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# Press release: Two-thirds of motorists would risk their lives in a flood

A shocking two-thirds of drivers would gamble with their safety by driving through floodwater – even though this is the leading cause of death during a flood, new figures have revealed.

In a survey commissioned by the Environment Agency and the AA, 68% of motorists admitted they'd take the risk rather than find a safer route.

The alarming figures emerge as the Environment Agency runs its campaign warning people across the country to be prepared for flooding in advance by [checking their risk and signing up for free warnings](#)

The AA has rescued more than 14,500 drivers from floods since 2013 with the top spot being Rufford Lane in Newark, Nottinghamshire, where over 100 rescues have been carried out in the last 5 years.

Driving through floodwater puts the lives of drivers and their passengers on the line, risks the safety of emergency responders, and often causes serious damage to the vehicle, with three-quarters of flood-damaged cars ultimately being written off.

Caroline Douglass, Director of Incident Management and Resilience at the Environment Agency, said:

The results of this survey are extremely concerning – no one should put their own life or those of their friends and family at risk during a flood. Just 30cm of water can float a family car, and smaller cars take even less.

If you're driving long distances this winter, please check online for any flood warnings in force along your route, and if you find your way blocked by floodwater, never take the risk – turn around and find another way.

Vince Crane, AA Patrol of the Year, said:

If the road ahead is flooded, don't chance it – flood water can be deceptively deep and can mask other hazards on the road.

It only takes an egg-cupful of water to be sucked into your engine to wreck it and on many cars, the engine's air intake is low down at the front.

As well as the damage to your car, attempting to drive through flood water puts you and your passengers in danger – so it's just

not worth the risk.

The survey of more than 18,000 AA members, carried out by Populus also found that:

- Women in Yorkshire and Humber are the safest drivers in a flood, being the least likely to attempt to drive through flood water and the most likely to turn around and find another route.
- Men in the South East and East of England are most likely to put themselves and their passengers in danger by driving through flood water – with nearly 3/4 (74%) saying that they would risk driving through rather than find an alternative route.
- Under a third of all drivers would turn around and find another route if their way was blocked by flood water.
- Men are more likely to drive through flood water than women – with 72% admitting that they would try it, compared with 60% of women.
- People under 34 are slightly less likely to drive through flood water than those 35 and above, while the under-24s in London are the least likely to drive through flood water.

5.2 million homes and businesses in England are at risk of flooding. This winter the Environment Agency is encouraging people to be prepared and stay safe during flooding by [checking their flood risk online](#).

For more information on driving in heavy rain and standing water visit the [AA's website](#).

The top 10 spots for rescues from flood water January 2013 – December 2017 were:

Location	Breakdown
Rufford lane, Newark, Nottingham	101
Slash Lane, Barrow upon Soar, Loughborough	77
Houndsfield Lane, Shirley, Solihull	47
Bridgenorth Road, Trescott, Wolverhampton	39
Riverside, Eynsford, Dartford, Kent	39
Bucklebury, West Berkshire	32
Mountsorrel, Loughborough	31
Hawkswood Lane, Fulmer, Gerrards Cross	31
Winterbourne, Wiltshire	30
Mill Lane, Brockenhurst, Hampshire	30

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# Press release: Holmwood drilling site consultation extended and new date for drop-in event

*Updated:* New date for drop-in event in Holmwood.

The Environment Agency invites residents living near the Holmwood oil and gas exploratory site in Dorking, Surrey, to a re-scheduled 'drop-in' event as part of its consultation on a permit application.

The public information event (cancelled last week due to safety concerns caused by the bad weather) will take place between 2.00pm and 7.30pm, Thursday 15 March 2018 at:

Dorking Halls (Martineau Hall)

Reigate Road

Dorking

RH4 1SG

Visitors will be able to discuss the application and the process being followed to determine it, and talk to Environment Agency representatives about how they regulate oil and gas activities.

The consultation period has also been extended by 2 weeks with a new closing date of 29 March 2018 (formerly 15 March). Consultation is on the application by Europa Oil & Gas Limited for a bespoke environmental permit, which is currently being considered by the Environment Agency.

Further information on the applications, a copy of our draft decision document and details of how to comment can be found [online](#).

An Environment Agency spokesperson said:

We were disappointed to have to postpone the event last week, due to bad weather. Our aim is to give everyone a chance to understand the proposed activity and to be able to attend, but without putting themselves at risk through travelling in hazardous conditions. This is an opportunity for local people to find out more about the operations at Holmwood and how we regulate these activities.

An environmental permit sets out stringent conditions that a site must adhere to. We will not issue an environmental permit for a

site if we consider that activities taking place will cause significant pollution to the environment or harm to human health.

Although we are minded to approve the applications for the bespoke and standard rules permit, we are still in the determination process and a final decision has not yet been made. We want to hear from the public and understand people's views on the application. Everybody has the chance to see what the permits may look like and to raise any additional concerns before we make any final decision.