

News story: South West Water fail to report dead fish after polluting Devon stream

South West Water has been ordered to pay £89,000 in fines and costs for polluting a stream in Woodbury near Exeter. The case was brought by the Environment Agency.

A court heard how large numbers of fish died following the incident at Ham Lane Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) in September 2014 following an illegal discharge. CSOs are allowed to discharge during storm conditions to prevent the internal flooding of properties. They are not permitted to operate during periods of dry weather.

The spill was caused by a blockage that resulted in effluent being discharged into a nearby stream over one to two days. The pollution adversely affected water quality in the stream and killed more than 150 fish.

The water company must report any fish kills that occur following a pollution incident. It failed to report this important information to the Environment Agency.

Instead, a witness alerted the Environment Agency to the seriousness of the incident after seeing South West Water staff collect and remove dead fish from below the CSO discharge pipe over several days as part of its remediation work on the stream.

The discharge occurred during a period of dry weather. The dead fish included minnows, stone loach, bullhead and eels.

Pete Ball of the Environment Agency said:

It is important water companies regularly inspect and maintain their structures and assets such as CSOs to ensure they are operating in accordance with their permit and do not cause pollution.

While South West Water responded quickly to this incident, it failed to report the extent of the environmental impact of this spill, especially the fish deaths.

Appearing before Exeter Crown Court, South West Water Ltd was fined £70,000 and ordered to pay £19,023 costs after pleading guilty to breaching its environmental permit at Ham Lane Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO), Woodbury on or around 27 September 2014.

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Notice: NG13 9DU, Smite Farms Limited: environmental permit issued

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

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: Smite Farms Limited
- Installation name: Smite Lane Farm
- Permit number: EPR/DP3136DM/V002

Notice: TA1 5LZ, Wastecare Limited: environmental permit issued

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

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: Wastecare Limited
- Installation name: Unit 3 Cornishway East
- Permit number: EPR/AP3894EA/V004

News story: Exercise Wessex Flare pump test being held in Somerset

A high-volume pump used during major flood events will be tested in Somerset next week (4 to 6 April 2017) as part of Exercise Wessex Flare – a 3-day training exercise run by the Environment Agency.

The 24-inch diameter steel and alloy diesel pump is capable of pumping 1,650 litres of water per second – the equivalent of filling 20 baths in a second. It will be loaded onto an 8-wheel lorry at its base in Bawdrip village, and transported to the remote North Drain pumping station several miles away.

A team of incident operatives and experienced pump specialists from across the country will then attach the 12-tonne pump to 40 metres of pipework over a period of at least 8 hours before setting it in motion.

Operations manager Robbie Williams said:

Flooding can have a devastating impact on people's lives and homes. We care about our communities and want to do whatever we can to help prevent this type of incident. Using pumps to manage water levels and reduce the impact of flooding is one of the many ways we can do this, alongside temporary defence barriers.

Preparing and practising pump deployment helps to ensure we act more quickly and effectively. It's also an opportunity to develop knowledge and skills so people can confidently operate this type of heavy machinery nationwide, with the help of the military and other groups.

The exercise builds on Exercise Wessex Teal where Wiltshire-based soldiers were trained to deploy temporary defence barriers. Some of those soldiers will be on hand to watch the pump in action and learn how it works. The Environment Agency's new Incident Command Unit (ICU) will also be on-site streaming live images of the exercise back to the Agency's Bridgwater incident room.

The ICU serves as a mobile incident room and temporary headquarters for staff out in the field, enabling better site management, situational awareness and visibility in flood risk communities.

It is important everybody is aware of their own flood risk. People can find out how to get ready and check their flood risk on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) or calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188.