

SEPA invites you to share your views on sector plan for oil and gas decommissioning

📅 12 October 2018

Everyone with an interest in the environment is being encouraged to share their views on SEPA's sector plan for the emerging oil and gas decommissioning industry.

- SEPA is consulting on its sector plan for the emerging oil and gas decommissioning industry.
- Between 2016 and 2030 at least 60% of the oil and gas installations in the northern and central North Sea will be decommissioned.
- Consultees are being urged to have their say on the plan before 20 November.

Everyone with an interest in the environment is being encouraged to share their views on SEPA's sector plan for the emerging oil and gas decommissioning industry.

SEPA's sector plans will be at the heart of everything the agency does and will shape its interactions with sectors and the businesses in them. The sector plan for oil and gas decommissioning aims to bring a clear and co-ordinated approach to regulation, focusing SEPA on delivery and using its staff more powerfully to engage.

Between 2016 and 2030 at least 60% of the oil and gas installations in the northern and central North Sea will be decommissioned. As Scotland competes to win decommissioning contracts, there is potential for at least 480,000 tonnes of material to be brought to Scotland for processing. The sector plan aims to ensure that all operators meet a minimum standard of environmental compliance and as many as possible go further.

The incentives for Scottish businesses are massive with the Scottish Government recently making an additional £5 million available to the supply chain in Scotland to help maximise the economic benefit from the decommissioning of North Sea infrastructure.

Operators and regulators will need to work together to ensure, whether within Scotland, the UK or abroad, that infrastructure is processed at well-equipped yards which offer a high degree of environmental protection.

SEPA's sector plan for oil and gas decommissioning focuses on how the agency will work directly with oil and gas operators, waste operators, Port Authorities, trade bodies and also other environmental agencies, regulators and government bodies to facilitate a consistent approach to this emerging sector.

Consultees have until 20 November 2018 to respond to the consultation which is available to view on [SEPA's Consultation Hub](#).

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

"Every day SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland's environment and we are clear that compliance is non-negotiable. 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.

"The sector plan for the emerging oil and gas decommissioning industry realises that Scotland needs a 21st century regulator that will encourage businesses to think about going beyond compliance and creating commercial success from environmental excellence.

"It is important that we have the views of as many people as possible across Scotland on this sector plan to ensure we get this right. If you have an interest in the environment please read the documents and tell us what you think."

Regulators' Pioneer Fund

Last week it was announced that SEPA will receive funding from the Regulators' Pioneer Fund for a decommissioning regulatory hub. This will bring together operating companies and multiple regulators (from the oil and gas industry and the waste supply chain) to address cross-cutting areas, share best practices, create innovative solutions and manage the associated risks together.

Commenting on the funding which SEPA received from the Regulators' Pioneer Fund Allan Reid, SEPA's Director of Commercial Services, said:

"The decommissioning hub will help implement SEPA's sector plan by addressing cross cutting areas, and driving the potential to reduce, re-use and recycle materials. This will ultimately develop knowledge and experience across the sector and help deliver economic growth, health and safety as well as environmental improvements."

Ends

[Environmental compliance of Scottish business exceeds 90% for third year in](#)

[a row](#)

✖ 05 October 2018

90.97% of Scottish regulated business sites assessed were compliant. Scotch Whisky distillers over 90% compliance for the fourth year in a row. 75 sites assessed as non-compliant for the last two years became compliant. 41 sites classified as 'Very Poor' in 2016 improved their compliance rating. 17 sites moved from 'Very Poor' to Compliant. 9 sites moved from 'Very Poor' to 'Excellent'

Environmental performance amongst Scottish regulated businesses and other organisations in 2017 remained high, with 90.97% of sites recorded as 'Excellent', 'Good' or 'Broadly Compliant', according to results published today (5 October 2018) by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

Compliance band	2017		Compliance rate
	No of licences assessed	%	
Excellent	3,904	77.78%	90.97% compliant
Good	619	12.33%	
Broadly Compliant	43	0.86%	
At Risk	141	2.81%	9.03% non-compliant
Poor	272	5.42%	
Very Poor	40	0.80%	
OVERALL	5,019	100%	

A key part of SEPA's Regulatory Strategy, One Planet Prosperity, is to drive all businesses not yet meeting standards into full compliance with the environmental laws in Scotland. SEPA's Compliance Assessment Scheme (CAS) rates an operator's environmental performance against their licence conditions. The annual results enable SEPA to take a targeted approach which focuses on high risk operations and under-performing sites more frequently than compliant or low risk activities.

Scotch Whisky Sector hits high level of compliance

Scotland is known for its national drink across the world. With 39 bottles exported every second, to more than 180 countries, it accounts for 70% per cent of Scottish food and drink exports.

The environmental performance of Scotch Whisky remains one of the nation's highest achieving sectors – over 90% compliance for the fourth year in a row. Of the 172 licences assessed in 2017 for water abstraction, water discharges and effluent quality standards, 162 accomplished Excellent, Good and Broadly Compliant ratings, bringing the overall compliance to 94.19% for the calendar year.

Successful businesses in future will be those that use low amounts of water, materials and carbon-based energy and create little waste. Prosperous societies will be comprised of these businesses. Whisky distillers are

working towards this, as demonstrated by the Scotch Whisky Association's Environmental Strategy 2018 progress report. The industry has made significant progress against a number of environmental targets, and the 2018 Report details how the non-fossil fuel target has been achieved four years early. The sector strategy focuses on water usage and carbon emissions and links directly to Scotland's globally ambitious circular economy strategy.

The industry's exceptional performance has been highlighted as SEPA launches its first sector plan to support innovative and sustainable practices across key industries, to enable and empower businesses to go beyond compliance.

Officially launched today by SEPA's Chief Executive, Terry A'Hearn, at Edrington's new distillery and brand home for The Macallan in Speyside, the [Scotch Whisky Sector Plan](#) sets out a new vision for a sustainable future for Scotland's no 1 export.

Sector plans provide a clear coordinated approach to regulation and engagement with sectors. This is the foundation for us to develop new partnerships, engage operators and stakeholders and informs how our staff work together to produce information and evidence for decision making.

Aligned with the 'excellent' performance of the Scotch Whisky sector, SEPA's compliance assessment scheme offers insight to sectors which require a fresh focus for the agency.

Aquaculture remains a prominent focus of environmental regulation. The subject of two Scottish Parliamentary inquiries and a comprehensive regulatory review by SEPA, Scotland's aquaculture sector saw overall compliance levels drop during 2017 to 81.14%, against a relative peak of 85.75% in 2016.

Non-compliant fish farms rose from 50 to 56 failing sites in 2017 due to a lack of monitoring or abstraction data being submitted on time by fish farm operators and an increase in farms failing due to effluent treatment issues.

SEPA is firmly committed to protecting and enhancing Scotland's environment and will shortly announce a revised regulatory regime that will firmly strengthen the regulation of the sector and a comprehensive programme of public engagement across Scotland.

The regime will include fresh modelling using the best available science, enhanced site based environmental monitoring, a new approach to sustainable siting of marine cage fish farms, and new approach for controlling the use of medicines aligned with encouraging innovation in the containment of marine waste.

Landfill also emerges as a sector where compliance remains a focus with rates in the low to mid 80s for several years now. The 2017 score was 85.31%.

The sector continues to be affected by chronic compliance issues as the number of facilities which remained non-complaint for two consecutive years increased from 8 to 10, and odour complaints, management failings and the failure to submit data returns, continued to be key reasons for poor

performance.

We know that non-compliant landfill sites create problems for local communities, and our Landfill Sector Plan is currently in development. This will carry forward a series of priority actions to tackle the problems of chronic non-compliance by providing a robust approach towards addressing the key obstacles affecting environmental improvement.

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

Every day, SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland's environment helping communities and businesses thrive within the resources of our planet. We call this One Planet Prosperity. As part of that we're clear, environmental compliance is non-negotiable. Every Scottish business will comply with the law, and we'll work to ensure as many as possible will go even further.

"We'll work positively with those who want to do the right thing by Scotland's environment, such as the Scotch Whisky sector. We've seen consistently high compliance for several years – demonstrating that high environmental performance and prosperity are mutually dependent.

"Our Scotch Whisky Sector Plan sets out how we'll continue our firm focus on environmental sustainability and look for wider opportunities across the supply chain, including in cereal production, transport, bottle manufacturing and packaging.

"We're also clear that we will not tolerate consistent non-compliance. Our annual compliance report card enables us to systematically identify the compliance issues that need to be tackled in sectors like aquaculture and landfill. Local communities will rightly hold us to account if future years do not show an improvement."

Dagmar Droogsma, Industry Director of the Scotch Whisky Association, said:

The Scotch Whisky industry takes sustainability seriously. That is why we have put in place rigorous and ambitious targets in our sector-leading environmental strategy.

"The launch of SEPA's Scotch Whisky Sector Plan is a welcome step toward deepening the cooperation between industry and regulators to ensure targets are met.

"The Scotch Whisky industry has more work to do to ensure responsible water use, but we are determined to drive up standards and continue to be an environmental leader and an example for others to follow."

Graham Hutcheon, Group Operations Director at *Edrington*, said:

We're proud that SEPA is launching the Scotch Whisky sector plan at The Macallan. Designed to blend into the natural landscape and running on 95% renewable energy, this distillery challenges perceptions of what our industry can achieve. We welcome the new challenges laid down in the Scotch Whisky sector plan and we will work together to drive further improvements in environmental performance."

Notes to editors

Total licence numbers

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There can be a discrepancy between the over-all figures in our release and totals when added up from individual sites on our website. This is because the details of a number of sites we regulate are not published for National Security reasons (259 in 2017) but are counted in our overall figures.

- Not all Radioactive Substances Act licences are published online. As well as the compliance data for the nine nuclear and radioactive substances sites published, we also regulate smaller authorised radioactive sources, many of which are used in the offshore oil industry and onshore in industrial processes. These are not published online.
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[SEPA joins forces with UK agency and industry partners to drive out waste crime](#)

 04 October 2018

Illegal cross-border waste haulage and disposal is the target of a series of new multi-agency interventions as part of the £3.8m LIFE SMART Waste project, which is led by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and co-funded by the European Union.

In tandem with police forces across Britain and the English, Welsh and Northern Irish environment agencies, the Drive out waste crime initiative involves a series of road stops, site visits and awareness-raising activity to remind hauliers of their responsibilities relating to waste haulage and disposal.

Waste crime is estimated to cost the UK economy around £600m a year and is

known to include trans-border activity, including the illegal transport and dumping of waste in Scotland by hauliers travelling from England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Intelligence gathered by the LIFE SMART Waste project indicates that waste is being hauled from England and Wales and illegally deposited in Scotland," said Kath McDowall, Unit Manager in SEPA's Waste Crime Investigations Team.

"Several companies are known to be involved and many of these are under investigation by SEPA's Waste Crime Investigation Team for criminal offences. There are also indications of serious and organised crime group involvement in the transport, sale and disposal of illegal waste – so it's vital that we work with partners across the UK to tackle this issue.

"As Scotland's environmental regulator, SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland's environment and we are clear that compliance is non-negotiable. Waste crime will not be tolerated and SEPA will, with its partners, pursue and take proportionate action against those who seek to profit from waste crime."

The Environment Agency, Natural Resources Wales and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency are SEPA's partner enforcement agencies on the waste crime activity, alongside Police Scotland and forces in England and Wales, British Transport Police, Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), Office of the Traffic Commissioner for Scotland, HM Revenue and Customs and the Scottish Business Resilience Centre.

SEPA's trade partners for the Drive out waste crime campaign include the Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association, Transport Association and British International Freight Association, with further industry dissemination support from the National Farmers Union, AXA Insurance, Zurich Insurance and the British Insurers Brokers Association (BIBA).

Road Stops

The action on waste crime has included two days of out-of-hours road stops on 20 and 21 September on the A75 at Glenluce in Dumfries and Galloway, specifically targeting lorries and vans travelling to and from ferry crossings to Northern Ireland. These aimed to gather intelligence on waste crime including metal theft, and were led by British Transport Police as part of Operation MODE. This is part of UK-wide Transport Threat Theme activity, where partners are working together across transport modes to tackle serious and organised crime. British Transport Police's Transport Threat Theme partners are Border Force, SEPA, DVSA, HM Revenue and Customs, Immigration Enforcement, Police Scotland (including Roads Policing and Borders Policing Command), and the Scottish Business Resilience Centre.

Metal theft is estimated to cost the UK at least £220m a year. Since

September 2016, it has been illegal in Scotland (under the Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2015) to trade scrap metal for cash or accept scrap metal without verifying the identity of the seller. Similar laws are in place across England and Wales and Northern Ireland.

When criminals strip and re-sell metal from railways, utility companies and properties, it can cause damage and disruption to lives and businesses that far exceeds the costs of the commodity stolen," said Detective Inspector Arlene Wilson of the British Transport Police, which is the national policing lead on metal theft in Scotland, England and Wales.

"Hauliers may be committing an offence by transporting or illegally disposing of metal or other waste without the required permissions and this could leave them liable to prosecution and operational sanctions.

"Criminals often believe they can escape the law by crossing the border into another jurisdiction. But with multi-agency partners working together and sharing intelligence across the UK, this just isn't the case. Working with SEPA and its partners, the British Transport Police is determined to tackle this problem."

A third multi-agency road stop took place yesterday, 3 October, at Gretna Services on the A74 (M) and A1 to address cross-border activity including the illegal dumping of waste and transport of other potential illicit goods, alongside road traffic offences. This involved both SEPA and Environment Agency officers conducting joint duty of care and waste carrier checks on vehicles crossing the border. Natural Resources Wales, British Transport Police, DVSA, Police Scotland, Scottish Business Resilience Centre and HMRC were also involved.

Site visit

The waste crime activity has also included a site visit, on 1 October, to a scrap metal site in the Lanarkshire area. The specific aim of this visit was to look for possible signs of metal theft or stolen vehicles. The visit was led by British Transport Police alongside SEPA, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and DVSA.

Awareness-raising activity

As part of the initiative, SEPA has created a Drive out waste crime flyer that has been handed out at road checks and placed in service stations and truck stops on the M74 and A1. The flyer is available in alternative languages and warns hauliers that:

- Anyone who produces, stores and manages waste is obligated to ensure it does not cause harm to human health or pollution to the environment under waste regulations and Duty of Care* legislation.
- You may be committing an offence by transporting or illegally disposing

of waste without the required permissions and this could leave you liable to prosecution and operating sanctions.

- Failure to obey the law could result in conviction, a fine of up to £40,000, the loss of your operating licence and a jail sentence.

The flyer is also being distributed by SEPA's project partners, including the Scottish Business Resilience Centre, British Insurance Brokers Association, Axa, Zurich, National Farmers Union Scotland, , Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime, DVSA, HMRC, Road Haulage Association, Fleet Transport Association, Transport Association, British Institute of Freight Forwarders, Chartered Institution of Wastes Management, Environmental Services Association and Scottish Environmental Services Association. Members of SEPA's LIFE SMART Waste Expert Group including Natural Resources Wales and Northern Ireland Environment Agency will also distribute the flyer through their websites and internal structures.

Other awareness raising activity includes digital, social media and press activity by SEPA, with support from agency and industry partners during October.

Lynsae Tulloch, Chief Operating Officer of the Scottish Business Resilience Centre, explained how the impact of illegal waste was far-reaching.

Illegal waste management is a blight on our environment, our local communities and businesses. These illegal waste sites mean foul odours, water pollution, pest infestations and the increased risk of fire, which results in essential funds from the public purse being diverted to cover the clean-up costs.

"Critically, criminals involved in the illegal movement and disposal of waste are diverting income from legitimate operators, depriving them of turnover. Some haulage firms are also being used to transport waste to disposal sites – without them even knowing they're involved in illegal activity.

Tulloch explained how safeguards can minimise the risk of waste criminals: "When negotiating waste haulage contracts, ensure you fully comply with waste duty of care regulations. Always check in advance that the delivery site is authorised to accept the proposed type and amount of waste. We encourage all businesses to continue to be vigilant and report any suspicious transfers or disposals by rogue operators."

The Drive out waste crime flyer is available on the SEPA website: [English version](#)

***Duty of Care is a code of practice set out in environmental law (Section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as amended)) that legally requires any business, not-for-profit organisation, or public sector body to store and dispose of their waste in a responsible manner.**

About LIFE SMART Waste

LIFE SMART Waste is a £3.8m EU co-funded project, led by SEPA, with the aim of demonstrating innovative ways of understanding, tackling and reducing waste-related crime. LSW is committed to undertaking three intelligence-led waste crime interventions to test the project's newly developed tools and approaches. The first of these focused on the illegal warehousing of waste and took part in December 2017 in partnership with Crimestoppers, the independent charity that helps the police to solve crimes. The Drive out waste crime initiative is the second intervention, with the third intervention still in planning.

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The waste crime activity has also included a site visit, on 1 October, to a scrap metal site in the Lanarkshire area. The specific aim of this visit was to look for possible signs of metal theft or stolen vehicles. The visit was led by British Transport Police alongside SEPA, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and DVSA.

Awareness-raising activity

As part of the initiative, SEPA has created a Drive out waste crime flyer that has been handed out at road checks and placed in service stations and truck stops on the M74 and A1. The flyer is available in alternative languages and warns hauliers that:

- Anyone who produces, stores and manages waste is obligated to ensure it does not cause harm to human health or pollution to the environment under waste regulations and Duty of Care* legislation.
- You may be committing an offence by transporting or illegally disposing of waste without the required permissions and this could leave you liable to prosecution and operating sanctions.
- Failure to obey the law could result in conviction, a fine of up to £40,000, the loss of your operating licence and a jail sentence.

The flyer is also being distributed by SEPA’s project partners, including the Scottish Business Resilience Centre, British Insurance Brokers Association, Axa, Zurich, National Farmers Union Scotland, , Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime, DVSA, HMRC, Road Haulage Association, Fleet Transport Association, Transport Association, British Institute of Freight Forwarders, Chartered Institution of Wastes Management, Environmental Services Association and Scottish Environmental Services Association. Members of SEPA’s LIFE SMART Waste Expert Group including Natural Resources Wales and Northern Ireland Environment Agency will also distribute the flyer through

their websites and internal structures.

Other awareness raising activity includes digital, social media and press activity by SEPA, with support from agency and industry partners during October.

Lynsae Tulloch, Chief Operating Officer of the Scottish Business Resilience Centre, explained how the impact of illegal waste was far-reaching.

Illegal waste management is a blight on our environment, our local communities and businesses. These illegal waste sites mean foul odours, water pollution, pest infestations and the increased risk of fire, which results in essential funds from the public purse being diverted to cover the clean-up costs.

“Critically, criminals involved in the illegal movement and disposal of waste are diverting income from legitimate operators, depriving them of turnover. Some haulage firms are also being used to transport waste to disposal sites – without them even knowing they’re involved in illegal activity.

Tulloch explained how safeguards can minimise the risk of waste criminals: “When negotiating waste haulage contracts, ensure you fully comply with waste duty of care regulations. Always check in advance that the delivery site is authorised to accept the proposed type and amount of waste. We encourage all businesses to continue to be vigilant and report any suspicious transfers or disposals by rogue operators.”

The Drive out waste crime flyer is available on the SEPA website: [English version](#)

***Duty of Care is a code of practice set out in environmental law (Section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as amended)) that legally requires any business, not-for-profit organisation, or public sector body to store and dispose of their waste in a responsible manner.**

About LIFE SMART Waste

LIFE SMART Waste is a £3.8m EU co-funded project, led by SEPA, with the aim of demonstrating innovative ways of understanding, tackling and reducing waste-related crime. LSW is committed to undertaking three intelligence-led waste crime interventions to test the project’s newly developed tools and approaches. The first of these focused on the illegal warehousing of waste and took part in December 2017 in partnership with Crimestoppers, the independent charity that helps the police to solve crimes. The Drive out waste crime initiative is the second intervention, with the third intervention still in planning.