

## Press release: Leatherhead van destroyed after link to waste crime

A van parked at an illegal waste site in Surrey has been crushed by the Environment Agency after it was linked to the unlawful dumping of rubbish.

The green Ford Transit was seized following an investigation into large-scale unlawful disposal of commercial waste.

The Environment Agency found out the van was used in Leatherhead through a tip-off by enforcement officers at Mole Valley District Council.

A number of sites across the South East were broken into, with locks and chains cut, and security fencing removed, and then filled with building materials and other rubbish. The owners were then left with a large clean-up bill, usually in the tens of thousands of pounds.

As the Transit was reduced to nothing more than crumpled metal and glass chippings, householders and small businesses across Surrey were urged to ask people taking their waste away where it will end up.

The Environment Agency has closed an average of two illegal waste sites a day across England in the past 12 months.

Daniel Kettridge, Enforcement Manager for the Environment Agency in Surrey, said:

Ask the people removing your waste where it's being taken. They may just dump it – in a field, in woodland – anywhere.

Don't give waste to someone who can't prove they are a legitimate waste-carrier, as they are likely to dump your rubbish to avoid paying-waste disposal costs. Using illegal waste dealers may seem tempting, financially, but it can help fund organised crime.

We crushed this van to take one more vehicle used in waste crime off the road, and to send a message to anyone thinking of dumping waste on an industrial scale – your van or lorry could be next.

Always obtain a waste-transfer note as proof the person taking the waste is authorised to do so. If in any doubt, call our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60; Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111, or report it through [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org).

All firms have a responsibility for their commercial waste, and if your waste is found at an illegal site, you could end up in court. We encourage firms to familiarise themselves with their duty of care:

<https://www.gov.uk/managing-your-waste-an-overview>.

Failure of any business to comply with the law on waste management leaves open the potential for very heavy fines – £5,000 in a magistrates' court, or an unlimited fine if a case is referred to Crown court.

Waste crime drains the UK economy of £1 billion each year in clean-up costs and lost tax revenues, with a devastating effect on the environment and local communities. It encourages pest infestations and fires, which could lead to water and land contamination, plus air pollution from smoke. The Environment Agency can crush seized vehicles under the Control of Waste (Dealing with Seized Property) Regulations 2015.

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