

# **Press release: North East man fined for waste offences**

A Teesside man has been fined after he breached his environmental permit and then obstructed an Environment Agency officer during his investigation.

Glenn Norman Walsh, 56, of Blue House Point Road at Portrack, Stockton-on-Tees, appeared at Teesside Magistrates' Court on Tuesday 4 December where he pleaded guilty to all four allegations against him.

He was charged with two offences of breaching the terms of his environmental permit, one of failing to comply with an Enforcement Notice, and another of obstructing an Environment Agency officer in the exercise of his duties.

He was fined £1,173 and ordered to pay legal costs and a victim surcharge amounting to a total of £4,790.

## **Number of breaches found**

Prosecuting on behalf of the Environment Agency, Matthew Treece told the court that on 10 May 2017 Environment Agency officers visited SIS Plastics at Stockton-on-Tees where they found a number of breaches.

This included waste being stored without fire breaks, non-permitted waste accepted on to site, waste stored loose or in insecure containers, and waste being stored on land outside of the site.

Mr Walsh had also failed to tell the Environment Agency about the breakdown of the granulator, which is a piece of equipment central to the site's operation.

A number of enforcement notices were served, including one to remove all waste which is either sludge or liquid and dispose of it properly, which was met.

Another required all waste to be stored and treated properly, including all waste outside either being moved inside or into a secure container, or off site by 23 June 2018.

A visit on 19 April 2018 found there was still a risk of pollution due to fire, waste was still being stored outside and water was pooling in the yards due to inadequate drainage.

During a visit the following month Environment Agency officers were being shown around the site by the manager when Walsh approached angry and agitated, shouting at the officers to leave, and was abusive about one of them. The officers left without being able to inspect the premises.

The incident was captured on the officer's body worn video camera and the footage was played to the court before sentence.

On 25 June 2018 the officers returned and found large amounts of waste still stored outside and on the ground.

## **Body worn cameras**

Paul Whitehill, Enforcement Team Leader for the Environment Agency in the North East, said:

Deliberately flouting environmental permits impacts on the environment and local community as well as undercutting legitimate businesses who abide by their permits.

We take offences such as this extremely seriously and I hope this sends out a message to others that we will take appropriate action for anyone who disregards the law.

Environment Agency enforcement officers in the north east first trialled the use of body worn cameras last year to help reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour, assaults and threats against staff. They are currently being rolled out to teams elsewhere in the country. Paul added:

Our officers are doing an important job ensuring that waste sites are operating within the law and it's not acceptable for them to be subject to abuse such as this. The safety of our staff is paramount and they shouldn't have to put up with any kind of abusive or threatening behaviour.

Our preference is for the cameras to prevent hostility in the first place and I hope this serves as a warning to others that their actions are being recorded and will be used in future court proceedings.

The cameras – which are the norm among many enforcement agencies – can be used in a variety of ways, including at visits to poor performing waste sites, illegal waste sites, enforcement investigations and during fisheries and navigation patrols.

Officers must follow clear guidelines on use of the cameras, including telling people they are being filmed, and deleting any footage after a month unless it is used for evidential purposes.

[Body worn camera footage of obstruction offence](#)