

SEPA supporting Scottish farmers to do the right thing and avoid penalties for environmental impacts

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The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is calling on farmers, land managers and contractors, to contact their local SEPA office before starting river engineering projects after a farming partnership was served with a £600 penalty.

- SEPA is supporting Scottish farmers to do the right thing and avoid penalties.
- The call for farmers to talk to SEPA comes after the agency served a £600 penalty on The Firm of Nisbet Mill after engineering work in the River Teviot breached environmental regulations.
- SEPA is here to help and in addition to supporting the 'Farming & Water Scotland' online and social media resources, local officers are on hand to support Scottish farmers.

On 11 January 2019 SEPA served a fixed monetary penalty to The Firm of Nisbet Mill after the Jedburgh-based operator breached regulations on sediment removal.

SEPA, led by local officer Kate Grimsditch, carried out an investigation into the engineering work in the River Teviot and confirmed that several conditions within The Firm of Nisbet Mill's authorisation for sediment management had been breached. In this case, the partnership fully co-operated with SEPA's investigation, were keen to make amends and undertook prompt remedial action to ensure impacts to fish were lessened.

SEPA also served the contractor involved with a warning letter as whilst they had confirmed that an authorisation was in place, they did not ask to see the authorisation and associated conditions.

Ian Buchanan, SEPA's Chief Officer, Compliance and Beyond, said:

"Every day SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland's environment. We are committed to supporting farmers to do the right thing and avoid penalties for environmental impacts.

"Whilst The Firm of Nisbet Mill had an authorisation to undertake work in the River Teviot, the conditions were not fully complied with. This shows how important it is for farmers, and all land managers and contractors, to ensure they not only have the correct authorisations in place but that they also follow all the rules associated with the authorisation.

"In addition to the farming and water Scotland online and social media

support, farmers and contractors can contact officers at our local Galashiels office on 01896 754797 before undertaking projects.”

Engineering works can damage habitat in rivers, lochs and wetlands, in turn affecting populations of invertebrates, plants, birds and mammals.

Engineering works can also block the passage of migrating fish and damage spawning habitats during sensitive times. Some affected fish, such as salmon, are an important economic resource in many areas of Scotland. Engineering can also result in erosion of valuable adjacent land resources.

There is a wealth of advice and information available on [SEPA's website](#), including a range of good practice guides and at [Farming & Water Scotland](#). Details of Fixed Monetary Penalties are also published on [SEPA's website](#) in line with the legislative requirement.

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