

Man and haulage firm fined for illegally dumping waste soil

A man has been fined for illegally transporting waste soil – and the transport company from which he hired trucks to move it hit with hefty fine.

Sam Dowell, 30, was fined £1,840 at Cambridge Magistrates' Court last year for causing the transportation and dumping of waste soil without the appropriate permits. Dowell, who pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing, also had to pay £2,000 compensation. He also had to pay a third of the cost of removing the illegally dumped soil, plus costs of £1,900.

Patrick Coleman, 75, of Galsworthy Road, Barnet, North London, who is the sole director of haulage company PJC Sweepers Ltd, which rented the trucks to Dowell. Coleman was acquitted at Cambridgeshire Crown Court on 1 June 2022 for transporting waste without a permit. However, his company was fined £6,000 plus costs of £10,000, a further £4,000 compensation for the remediation of the site. He also had to pay a £170 victim surcharge at the same court on 4 July, 2022.

Dowell had been given a contract to help prepare a piece of land in readiness for the groundworks of a housing development in Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire. His employees carried out the work while he identified a site next to the Royston Sewage Treatment Works in Melbourn, Cambridgeshire, for dumping the waste soil. Dowell leased lorries from PJC Sweepers Ltd to move it.

However, this site is owned by AWG Land Holdings Ltd, part of the Anglian Water Group. Anglian Water Group includes Anglian Water Services Ltd, and did not have an environmental permit to accept waste.

Coleman's haulage company should have carried out duty of care checks to ensure the waste soil was being moved to an appropriately licensed waste site.

His Honour Judge Cooper observed:

Despite the drivers being challenged by a representative of the landowner to inform that the deposits were not authorised, they carried on regardless until the police were called. By then around 30 lorry loads of deposits had already been made.

Describing the actions of PJC Sweepers Ltd as "completely reckless", he added:

Anyone who puts profits before the protection of the environment needs to understand that they face a serious sentence.

Duty of care cannot be delegated to another company. There is a duty to check how the next waste holder in the chain will handle

the waste and where the wastes journey will end.

The failure by the company's employees to make these checks – which would have revealed that the receiving site was not a permitted site. This meant that the deposits of waste soil made on or before 14 January 2019 were illegal.

An environmental permit is important to prevent harm to the environment, nuisance to neighbours and protect the landowners from illegal deposits. It also ensure that the relevant taxes are paid. The defendants were prosecuted due to the undermining of legitimate waste management industry and the suffering to local communities caused by illegal deposits of this nature.

Simon Hawkins, Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

All waste companies must complete duty of care checks. By not following their duty of care, companies can potentially harm our natural resources and blight communities. It also undermines, legitimate businesses that do follow the rules, which enables the offender to gain an unfair commercial advantage over them.

Our role is to protect the environment for people and wildlife, so we won't hesitate to take action against those who put it at risk. And to businesses flouting the rules our message is clear: you won't get away with it.

Anyone who suspects illegal waste activity is reminded to report it to our 24-hour hotline by calling 0800 80 70 60, or anonymously contacting Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

You can check your waste collectors waste carriers registration at <https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers> or call 03708 506 506.

Last year the Environment Agency and partners launched the Joint Unit for Waste Crime, aiming to stop serious and organised crime in the UK Waste Industry. You can find out more about the initiative on our [website](#).

Summary of regulations under which the 2 parties were prosecuted:

The offences are all committed contrary to Section 33(1)(a) Environmental Protection Act 1990 and is an either-way offence. On summary conviction the maximum penalty is an unlimited fine and/or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 6 months. On conviction on indictment the maximum penalty is an unlimited fine and/or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 5 years.

From 6 April 2010, anyone operating a regulated facility to recover or dispose of waste can only do so in accordance with an environmental permit granted under the Environmental Permitting Regulations. An environmental permit is granted subject to a number of conditions to protect the

environment and local communities from potentially harmful substances. This includes such things as smell or litter nuisance, and requiring appropriate management systems and infrastructure to be in place prior to commencing any waste activities.

Certain relatively low risk activities are exempted from the need to have an environmental permit. There is no record of an environmental permit or registered exempt waste activities at the site.

Sam Dowell pleaded guilty at Cambridge Magistrates' Court on 29 March 2021, where he was sentenced on the same date.

Patrick Coleman was acquitted after a hearing at Cambridgeshire Crown Court on 1 June 2022.

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[Launching the Defence Centre for AI Research](#)

News story

Dstl and the Alan Turing Institute have jointly launched the Centre in order to research problems related to advancing artificial intelligence (AI) capability.



The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) has announced the formation of the Defence Centre for AI Research (DCAR) as part of the newly

released Defence AI Strategy and the recently established Defence AI Centre.

The Centre is being launched in conjunction with the [Alan Turing Institute](#), the UK's institute for AI and data science.

Funded through the Ministry of Defence's Chief Scientific Advisor, the Centre will focus on the underpinning problems associated with enabling advances in AI capability. Examples include areas such as:

- low short learning – the ability to train machines to learn without the need for vast amounts of data
- the application of AI to war gaming
- understanding the limits of AI models
- managing multiple sensors
- human-centric AI
- ethics

In many cases it is expected that outcomes will not only be of interest to defence but also the wider UK economy.

Whilst based in London, Turing will use its outreach to engage with universities around the country, drawing together the UK's best expertise.

The establishment of the Centre is expected to result in the creation of at least 5 to 8 new academic posts starting from September 2022, with the potential to grow further.

Glen Hart, Senior Principal Scientist from Dstl, commented:

The DCAR will be a centre of excellence which provides real focus to developing and applying AI ethically in defence contexts.

The [Defence AI Strategy](#) was published in June 2022 with the vision that, in terms of AI, the UK's MOD will be the world's most effective, efficient, trusted and influential defence organisation for its size.

The MOD is committed to [developing AI in an ambitious, safe and responsible way](#).

The creation of the DCAR follows the launch in June of the [Defence Data Research Centre \(DDRC\)](#) under a consortium led by the University of Exeter.

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Peaceful Presidential elections in Colombia signal a commitment to sustained and durable peace

Thank you, President. And I'd like to start by thanking Special Representative Massieu for your briefing and for the work of your team. I'd also like to appreciate and pay tribute to our briefers Father de Roux and Ms Piamba, and to welcome Foreign Minister Ramirez to our meeting today. Foreign Minister, we appreciate your dedicated engagement with this Council throughout your tenure.

President, I'd like to make three points today:

First, I would like to congratulate the people of Colombia for making their voices heard in last month's Presidential election. We commend political stakeholders, officials, and volunteers for their dedication and for helping to ensure that the election was fair, inclusive, and recognised by all parties.

We commend President-elect Petro's commitment to comprehensive implementation of the Final Peace Agreement and to addressing the challenges that remain. Foremost among these challenges, as we've heard, will be ensuring security for vulnerable communities affected by violence, displacement and confinement. We welcome the incoming administration's commitment to creating the conditions for sustained and durable peace in Colombia, and hope a resumption of talks with the ELN will contribute to this.

Second, the UK welcomes the publication of the Truth Commission's final report, a vital milestone in Colombia's reconciliation process. We pay tribute to the Commissioners' hard work in this vast undertaking, and to the thousands of victims who gave evidence for their courage.

The UK is committed to helping all parties implement the Commission's recommendations, and to supporting the follow-up committee that will supervise their implementation.

Third, we continue to encourage the acceleration of rural reform. Whilst significant steps have been taken so far, accelerated progress on the Territorially Focused Development Plans and the multipurpose cadastre should help build confidence in the commitment to peace and advance rural development to support the transformation of conflict-affected regions.

Mr President, in conclusion, the UK remains fully committed to supporting Colombia on its path to lasting peace, and to helping the people of Colombia to overcome the challenges that remain.

I thank you.

We have to act now to put the world on the path to a more sustainable future

Excellencies, colleagues, friends.

It is an absolute pleasure to be joining you today.

When we met last year, the UK co-convened a constructive discussion on effective climate adaptation, and a green and inclusive recovery from the pandemic.

Today is another important milestone.

Yes, much has changed in the last year.

We meet against the backdrop of multiple global crises, much precipitated by the Putin regime's illegal, brutal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.

And many now recognise that climate and environmental security are completely interlinked with energy and national security.

And whilst countries must deal with their immediate energy needs, many have understood that our shared long-term energy futures do not lie in fossil fuels.

But even as we deal with these challenges, the central premise of last year's session – that we must deliver a just and sustainable recovery – holds true.

Because just as the global economic situation is perilous, the science is clear that the chronic threat of climate change is getting worse.

Now, I am very pleased that the UK is at the forefront of the efforts to tackle global warming.

And last year's G7, convened in Carbis Bay, delivered a step change in infrastructure investment, in pursuit of clean, green growth.

We have continued to lead through our "British Investment Partnerships," and the "Clean Green Initiative," mobilising billions, and our financial expertise, to drive clean growth around the world.

And for me it has been an incredible honour to drive this agenda forward as COP26 President.

The Glasgow Climate Pact, forged amongst nearly 200 countries, was historic.

And based on the commitments made in that Pact, and indeed outside the negotiating rooms,

I believe that we were able to say with credibility that we kept alive the prospect of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels; and that we had supported the most vulnerable.

We got important commitments on mitigation, particularly the call for countries to revisit and strengthen their NDCs by the end of this year.

The Glasgow Sharm-el Sheikh work programme underlined the imperative for all countries to prepare and respond to climate risks.

And, for the first time ever in these processes, the Pact recognised the need to address the issue of loss and damage substantively, and systematically.

Countries, companies and financial institutions pledged to clean up vital sectors, to end deforestation, and to accelerate the move to clean technologies.

And we did important work to scale-up climate finance, with the \$100 billion Delivery Plan, the commitment to at least double adaptation finance by 2025, and work to ensure that finance flows to national and local adaptation priorities.

Financial institutions with over \$130 trillion of assets on their balance sheets committed to a net zero future.

And I was delighted that we were able to announce the first "Just Energy Transition Partnership," the South Africa JETP.

Now many of these commitments ensured we pushed forward across several of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals as well, from "Life Below Water" to "Life On Land."

What we achieved together in Glasgow was significant.

And I am pleased that we have seen some progress since November.

We've got 16 new, revised NDCs.

We've got a handful of new long-term strategies.

Over 2.5 billion people now covered by adaptation plans.

And extensive work to scale up and improve access to finance is continuing.

But, collectively, friends, the progress has been too limited, and just too slow.

Many of the commitments we heard in Glasgow remain just that, commitments.

Words on a page.

And all the while the evidence tells us that time is running out.

From the science of the IPCC reports, to the wildfires, droughts and floods

to which the world is sadly too often witness.

So, across all the commitments we made in Glasgow, we simply must quicken the pace.

If we don't, next year's Global Stocktake will make clear that we are not delivering on the Paris Goals, that 1.5 degrees is moving further, and frankly irreversibly, out of reach, and that we risk going beyond our limits to adapt.

The consequences of that would be grave, for every sector, and for every country.

This, my friends, is about the immediate impact on the lives and livelihoods of many millions around the world.

So, I will continue to urge countries and companies to redouble their efforts, to ensure that their emissions targets represent the highest possible ambition, and to implement the commitments that they have made.

And I am going to convene the second Climate and Development Ministerial in the margins of the UN General Assembly.

And we will of course continue to engage with our friends in Egypt.

In all this work, my message is a consistent one.

We do have an opportunity to build back better and greener, and to put the world on the path to a more sustainable future.

But we are running out of time.

We have to act.

And we have to act now.

Thank you.

[New call for UK public to stop using heated hairbrush and dryer model](#)

News story

OPSS issues further product safety warning to the public.



The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) has issued a further warning to the public to stop using a heated hairbrush and dryer which can catch fire during normal use.

The product, originally branded 'One Step model SM-5250', was initially subject to a Safety Gate alert notified by the UK in 2020. However, OPSS has since identified it is again being sold through online marketplaces. OPSS Recall alerts have now been posted on our ['Product Safety Alerts, Reports and Recalls' page](#) where you can check the details.

However, OPSS is also warning that unscrupulous sellers may be badging these dangerous products under a variety of brand names.

As a result, the public are being asked to be extra vigilant and check the design of any heated hairbrushes in their home, coloured black and pink (see image). The easiest step is to check if the manufacturer's name and address is on the product itself. If it is not, then consumers must stop using them immediately and contact the seller.

This urgent warning to the public has been issued by OPSS following its own tests of models it purchased through online marketplaces in recent weeks. All were found to be non-compliant, and a number caught fire during testing. Since issuing the warning on July 9, OPSS has uncovered further examples of this unsafe product on sale and taken action to have them removed from sale.

OPSS Chief Executive Graham Russell said:

"OPSS is issuing this further warning to the public because we believe there is real danger that these products will cause serious harm if used. OPSS has been working around the clock to take down these products since they were first identified but the multiple brand names under which they are sold means we need the public to take extra care."

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