

Press release: Chemicals disposal investigation: findings published

Sellafield Ltd has today published the findings of an internal investigation into the disposal of potentially hazardous chemicals at our site last year.

In October 2017, a chemicals inventory check in our Analytical Services building identified potentially hazardous chemicals requiring safe disposal.

In line with industry best practice, we requested the assistance of the Army's Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team to assist with these disposals.

The EOD disposed of the identified chemicals, along with other potentially hazardous chemicals subsequently identified, using the recognised safest method: controlled detonation on the Sellafield site.

Following the safe conclusion of these operations, we initiated an internal investigation to understand the root causes and recommend steps to improve our future handling of these substances.

The investigation has now concluded. It found the following:

There were 2 root causes:

1. Our approach to conventional (non-radiological) safety is not always tailored to the risks and hazards of individual facilities
2. Priority was not given to the disposal of redundant chemicals. This was because they were out of the conscious awareness of the majority of people within Analytical Services

Additional findings:

- All of the redundant chemicals involved were on our chemical inventory but there was a lack of recognition of the risk associated with their degradation
- A strong nuclear safety culture resulted in the risk being identified by employees

The investigation proposed recommendations:

1. A site-wide review of potentially hazardous chemicals identified as requiring non-immediate action following last year's inventory check. This will clarify who is responsible and will develop and implement a new approach for future chemical disposal.
2. An external benchmarking exercise to understand best practice for the management of complex chemical inventories.

3. A review of existing contracts to ensure specialist chemical advice and ongoing support is in place.
4. A new system for the oversight and control of chemical inventories.

Steve Bostock, Sellafield Ltd chief operating officer, said:

The Sellafield site is home to some of the oldest and most complex risks and hazards anywhere in the world.

It is our responsibility to make sure these hazards are managed in a way that protects our workforce, the local community and the environment.

We take this responsibility very seriously, which is why I initiated an investigation into last year's chemicals disposal event at the earliest opportunity.

I'm confident we now have a full understanding of the circumstances and an improved approach to the management of chemicals, which will also inform our approach to other potential hazards on our site.

PDF, 28.4KB, 3 pages

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[News story: Near miss with track workers at Clapham Junction](#)

Forward facing CCTV image showing position of workers prior to near miss (image courtesy of South Western Railway)

At around 05:51 hrs on 17 January 2018, an empty coaching stock train was involved in a near miss with three Network Rail workers near Clapham Junction

station. Nobody was injured, although the driver and the staff were shaken by the incident.

We have undertaken a [preliminary examination](#) into the circumstances surrounding this incident. Having assessed the evidence which has been gathered to date, we have decided to publish a [safety digest](#).

The safety digest will be made available on our website in the next few weeks.

[News story: Autonomous vehicle trial announced by HumanDrive](#)



Mike Wilson, Executive Director for Safety, Engineering and Standards, Highways England

Highways England is part of the consortium working alongside Nissan, who are leading the [HumanDrive](#) project.

Mike Wilson, Executive Director for Safety, Engineering and Standards at Highways England welcomed the announcement:

Highways England sees the potential benefits of greater automation of vehicles to deliver improved safety and increased mobility.

We will be working closely with our HumanDrive partners on the plans for the on-road testing. We will be taking the research and development of the Nissan vehicle to map how the introduction of such an autonomous vehicle can shape the future of our roads, in terms of safety, emissions, journey times and capacity.

[Press release: Suspended jail term for landowner over illegal landfill site](#)

The Environment Agency has successfully prosecuted a landowner and two men who blighted 19 acres of Cheshire farm land by dumping and landfilling tens of thousands of tonnes of waste.

Mr Eric Hale of Bank Top Farm near Frodsham was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment suspended for two years, disqualified from driving for 12 months ordered to work 200 hours unpaid and have a curfew of 8pm to 6am for three months after pleading guilty to operating an illegal waste site without an environmental permit and dumping and landfilling controlled waste on the land.

Mr Hale also paid £100,000 in contributions towards the Environment Agency's costs. Mr Dennis Whiting and Mr Stefan Street each received a Conditional Discharge for two years after pleading guilty to dumping and landfilling controlled waste.

The Environment Agency brought the case against Mr Eric Hale, Mr Dennis Whiting and Mr Stefan Street after a lengthy investigation. The investigation identified that significant amounts of waste were being brought on to the farm, which did not have an environmental permit.

The Environment Agency identified that the operation of the illegal site was closely connected with a waste company Eric Hale Skip Hire Ltd. The prosecution for the Environment Agency stated that the majority of waste collected by the company was illegally dumped and landfilled at Bank Top Farm instead of being taken to a legitimate waste site.

Tracey Rimmer, Area Environment Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

This operation demonstrates how the Environment Agency works in partnership to tackle serious waste crime. We have worked closely with the police and local authorities to pursue these criminals and bring them to justice. Waste crime is a serious issue diverting as much as £1 billion per year from legitimate business and the treasury.

During the course of the investigation Eric Hale, Steffan Street and Dennis Whiting were seen driving large waste vehicles which delivered, deposited and disposed of mixed waste, demolition waste including plasterboard and other waste including carpets and mattresses.

Trommel fines, which are a by-product produced during the recycling process

and consist of materials such as wood, aggregate, glass, ceramics and organics, were also dumped at Bank Top Farm. The unregulated deposit of waste has the potential to cause harm to the environment.

The Judge on sentencing said:

Eric Hale was driven by greed to continue the illegal operation.

Also the court did not accept any of the mitigation of the offending put forward but Eric Hale's substantial personal mitigating circumstances were acknowledged by the court.

If you see waste crime report it by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Waste crime can cause serious pollution to the environment put communities at risk and undermines legitimate business and the investment and economic growth that go with it. You can call the Environment Agency on 0370 850 6506 to find out how to responsibly manage any waste your business produces or visit www.gov.uk/managing-your-waste-an-overview/overview.

Press release: David Lidington in Wales and Scotland for talks on business and Brexit

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster David Lidington MP will visit Wales and Scotland this week, where he will meet with business leaders and politicians to discuss the economy and the UK's preparations for leaving the EU.

Mr Lidington will attend roundtable discussions with different sectors of business in Cardiff (Thursday, February 1st) and Edinburgh (Friday, February 2nd). The newly appointed Minister will also hold bilateral discussions on the EU Withdrawal Bill with both the Welsh First Minister and the Scottish Deputy First Minister on Thursday.

Speaking ahead of the visits to Cardiff and Edinburgh, David Lidington said:

I am very much looking forward to visiting Scotland and Wales. The UK Government is committed to building a Britain where our strong economy benefits all parts of the UK.

I know that businesses in Wales are excited by the opportunities that come from our plans to remove the tolls from the Severn Bridge. Our investment in broadband and UK City Deals are making a real difference in Wales and Scotland. I want to hear from businesses in Cardiff and Edinburgh about what else we can do to help drive economic growth.

I am also looking forward to continuing my discussions with Carwyn Jones and John Swinney on how we can make progress with the EU Withdrawal Bill in our face-to-face talks today. We need to work together to find an agreed way forward.

In Cardiff, David Lidington will co-host, with the Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns MP, a meeting of the regular Expert Panel group of representatives of the businesses, agriculture, fisheries and third sector in Wales that advises on the arrangements for leaving the EU.

The Secretary of State for Wales has established the group to work with him to deliver a smooth and orderly exit from the EU in Wales.

Speaking ahead of the meeting, Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

The UK Government is resolute in its commitment to delivering an EU exit that works for every part of the country, and to taking every opportunity along the way to further strengthen our precious union.

We have ensured that the Welsh Government and every sector in Wales have been fully and constructively engaged with the Brexit process, so we can together deliver the best possible deal for the people of Wales.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell said:

I look forward to meeting the Scottish Government later today. The return of powers from the EU will lead to a significant increase in the decision-making powers of Holyrood. We have made good progress in our discussions with the Scottish Government on common frameworks and will continue those discussions today. We want to agree an amendment to the EU (Withdrawal) Bill which we can then bring forward in the Lords.

The Minister will also chair a roundtable of Scottish business representatives in Edinburgh on Friday morning.

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