

Press release: Environment Agency discovers 6 illegal waste sites in one day in Bristol, Somerset and Wiltshire

Over the last 12 months the Environment Agency has seen an increase in illegal waste activity across Bristol, Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire.

The first of these events took place on Tuesday 21 November 2017. Environment Officers visited 15 locations in the Bristol, Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire area. They confirmed 6 illegal waste sites and found a number of unauthorised waste disposal activities, including waste being burnt.

Tackling waste crime is a top priority for the Environment Agency. Waste stored or disposed of without the proper environmental controls can have a huge impact on the environment, polluting watercourses, land and underground aquifers, and in some cases contributing to flooding. It is often an eyesore that attracts further dumping, while creating issues for neighbours such as smells and pests. The Environment Agency is determined to make life hard for criminals and to support legitimate businesses by disrupting the criminal element and taking tough enforcement action.

Andy Hicklin, Environment Agency Area Environment Manager for Wessex area, said:

Waste crime is a blight on communities and the environment and undermines legitimate business. Acting on reports from members of the public, days of action are just the first step in tackling waste crime. We will work with our partners in local authorities and use all of the tools at our disposal to disrupt, prevent and stop illegal waste activity.

The Environment Agency is asking members of the public to be vigilant; to contact them with information on anything suspicious. Illegal treatment and disposal of waste is a crime that blights lives and communities and damages the environment. Individuals involved in this type of illegal activity can be hostile and we would urge members of the public to avoid any direct contact with the culprits.

If you see or suspect illegal waste activities, report it anonymously to [Crimestoppers](#) or call 0800 555 111 or via the Environment Agency incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Press release: Preparing sirens for winter

Four sirens, located approximately 250 metres apart in Chiswell, will be activated on Thursday (30 November 2017) at 11am, 2pm and 5pm, weather permitting. Local residents are being informed in advance via a leaflet drop and door-knocking exercise.

Rachel Burden, Wessex Flood and Coast Risk Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

Regular siren testing is an essential part of our forward planning, not only to ensure we are incident ready, but also to make sure our community flood warning and informing measures are effective.

If severe storms hit Portland, the sirens will play a crucial part in alerting local residents to imminent danger and potential evacuation. Ultimately, these sirens could help save lives.

The Chiswell area of Portland is classed as a high risk flood area because of the potential for strong south westerly winds, high tides in Lyme Bay and the close proximity of properties to the sea.

Rachel added:

Chiswell was badly affected by the floods in 2013/2014. It is a vulnerable area and can take a heavy pounding from the tides when the south westerly wind picks up. Although good flood protection measures are in place, we can never fully defend against the worst that Mother Nature can throw at us.

The sirens, which are tested twice a year, are extremely loud so that they can be heard above the noise of crashing waves during a storm. These modern sirens were installed in 2010 and replaced older Second World War equipment. An additional siren was put in during 2015 in order to fill a 'quiet spot' which was identified during the storms of the previous winter.

The testing will involve remote activation from our Blandford incident room, from the coastguard's hut and from the individual sirens. Representatives from the Environment Agency will be on hand to assist.

The day supports the annual Environment Agency [Flood Action Campaign](#).

Driving and your eyesight: staying safe on the road

If you drive, it goes without saying that you know you need your eyes on the road at all times. What you might not know is that DVLA has minimum eyesight standards that all drivers need to demonstrate so they can be allowed to drive.

So how do we decide on the vision standards for driving? DVLA's Vision Panel Secretary Dr Gareth Rees tells us more about his role and these standards.



I've been a doctor for 41 years and have been DVLA's Vision Panel Secretary for 10 years. My main role is to liaise between DVLA and the [Honorary Medical Advisory Panel on Visual Disorders](#). The panel meets every 6 months and is made up of eyesight specialists, who provide DVLA with expert advice on how to apply and interpret the law when [assessing fitness to drive](#).

Think your eyesight's getting worse? Act now

We all have busy lives, and sometimes we might overlook the signs that our eyes are not as good as they were. You might be finding it harder to judge distances, you might be struggling to read the newspapers, or it's getting more difficult for you to drive at night. These are just a few signs that [your eyesight may be deteriorating](#).

In line with [advice from optometrists](#), our advice is that you should get your eyes tested at least every 2 years. But if you recognise any of the signs above, don't wait – go and get checked out straight away with your optician or doctor. If they advise you to tell DVLA about your eyesight, you can do this [online or by writing to us](#).

If you don't meet the eyesight standards, stop driving immediately and tell DVLA.

After you tell us about your condition

Don't worry – usually, most people who [tell us they've got a medical](#)

[condition](#) are still allowed to drive.

If you have a 'progressive' (worsening) condition but can still meet the eyesight standards for driving, you may get a short-term licence rather than a full-term one. This type of licence lasts for 1, 2, 3 or 5 years and when it's due for renewal, we let you know.

It's better to be safe than sorry. So if you're in doubt, get it checked out.

Follow DVLA on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and [subscribe](#) to our [Inside DVLA blog](#).

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News story: Civil news: change to telephone number for Recovery Services

You should use 0203 8144 366 if you wish to contact Recovery Services about the repayment of legal aid costs.

The new telephone number for Recovery Services is 0203 8144 366.

Callers to the new number will have the same options as before to have their call redirected to the right team for their enquiry.

Anyone calling the old number of 020 3334 6373 will hear a recorded message from 28 November 2017 asking them to redial using 0203 8144 366.

We will give notice before the recorded message is removed and the old number taken out of service.

Further information

RecoveryServices-Enquiries@Justice.gov.uk – for questions about this change

Press release: Foreign Secretary statement on Chennai Six verdict

Following the announcement of a verdict in the Chennai Six case, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Since I became Foreign Secretary, this case has been a top priority for everybody at the Foreign Office and today's verdict is fantastic news.

The FC0 has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to reunite these men with their families. The importance the UK government places on their case cannot be understated.

The men, their families and their supporters, who have campaigned unrelentingly, must be overjoyed. I share their delight and I hope they can return home as soon as possible.