

Press release: Tesco hit with major £8million fine for pollution incident

Tesco Stores Ltd has been ordered to pay over £8million in fines and costs after pleading guilty to a pollution incident.

The incident, which occurred in July 2014, sparked a huge multi-agency operation involving the Environment Agency, Lancashire County Council, United Utilities, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service and Lancashire Police.

It had a massive impact on the local community and environment with residents having to leave their homes due to petrol odours coming from the sewer network.

The Environment Agency's joint investigation with partners found that the incident resulted from Tesco's failure to address a known issue with part of the fuel delivery system and an inadequate alarm system and was compounded by poor emergency procedures.

Tesco were fined a total of £8million – £5million for the health and safety offence and £3million for the environmental offence.

Between Wednesday 2 July and Thursday 3 July 2014 approximately 23,500 litres of petrol escaped from a petrol filling tank at a petrol station in Haslingden operated by Tesco.

Petrol entered the sewerage system with the odours affecting residents up to 1km away causing people to seek medical attention with headaches and sickness. The odours remained in the homes for a number of days.

Some of the petrol also entered Langwood Brook and the River Irwell causing a significant environmental impact killing fish and other aquatic life.

Samples taken from the River Irwell detected oil up to three miles downstream. Over 40 dead fish, including brown trout, were found within 1.5 miles of where the pollution entered. Anglers reported dead fish in Bury, over six miles downstream.

About 23,500 litres of unleaded petrol leaked from the tank over a 29 hour period. Around 7,000 litres was later recovered at the site and the remainder escaped into the sewer system and watercourse.

Mark Easedale, an Environment Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

This pollution incident had a dramatically negative impact on the local community and the environment with Langwood Brook and the River Irwell severely affected. A week after the pollution incident an investigation by Environment Agency officers found fish populations in the River Irwell immediately downstream of Langwood

Brook were around 90% lower than those found upstream.

The sentencing today sends out a clear message to anyone whose recklessness causes serious pollution to the environment – we will be relentless in our investigations and take action wherever needed.

Our staff work 24/7 to protect people and wildlife from pollution incidents and we encourage people to report such incidents to the Environment Agency's Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

This was a joint prosecution with Lancashire County Council and Tesco Stores Ltd also pleaded guilty to an offence under the Health and Safety at Work Act.

County Councillor Albert Atkinson, deputy leader of Lancashire County Council with responsibility for Trading Standards, said:

This was a major leak of fuel in a relatively built-up area and close to a busy superstore. The potential consequences are only too obvious.

The fact that the leak was allowed to continue for more than 24 hours undoubtedly contributed to a risk of harm to people living and working nearby, as well as emergency services and other professionals attending the incident.

- Tesco Stores Ltd were fined a total of £8million at Preston Crown Court – £5million for the health and safety charge and £3million for the environmental offence. They were also ordered to pay Environment Agency costs of £35,434.30 and (approx.) £22,000 to Lancashire County Council.
 - Tesco Stores Ltd pleaded guilty to causing a water discharge activity not under and to the extent authorised by an Environmental Permit, contrary to Regulation 12(1)(b) and 38(1)(a) of the Environmental Permitting (England & Wales) Regulations 2010. A guilty plea was entered at an earlier hearing at Burnley Crown Court on 12 September 2016.
 - There was a further indictment led by Lancashire County Council: Contravention of Regulation 6(8) of the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2002 contrary to s.33(1)(c) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. A guilty plea was also entered for this charge.
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News story: Heat health warning: 2017

With hot weather on the horizon for all of England this weekend, some people will be heading outside and enjoying the sunshine. PHE is suggesting that people should also plan ahead and think about the best ways to beat the heat.

The Met Office said today that there is a high chance that all parts except the north west will experience temperatures of about 28°C during the day and around 15°C at night from tomorrow (Saturday 17 June 2017).

Experts at PHE say that this is the point where hot weather can impact public health.

Dr Thomas Waite from PHE said:

Much of the advice on beating the heat is common sense and for most people there's nothing to really worry about. But before the hot weather arrives, it is a really good time to think about what you can do to protect you and your family and friends.

For some people, such as older people, those with underlying health conditions and those with young children, the summer heat can bring real health risks. That's why we're urging everyone to keep an eye on those you know who may be at risk this summer. If you're able, ask if your friends, family or neighbours need any support.

There are lots of useful tips and guidance on [NHS Choices](#) website and more detail available in the [Heatwave Plan for England](#). Up to date forecasts are available at www.metoffice.gov.uk.

The top ways for staying safe when the heat arrives are to:

- look out for others, especially older people, young children and babies and those with underlying health conditions
- close curtains on rooms that face the sun to keep indoor spaces cooler and remember it may be cooler outdoors than indoors
- drink plenty of water as sugary, alcoholic and caffeinated drinks can make you more dehydrated
- never leave anyone in a closed, parked vehicle, especially infants, young children or animals
- try to keep out of the sun between 11am to 3pm
- take care and follow local safety advice, if you are going into the water to cool down
- walk in the shade, apply sunscreen and wear a hat, if you have to go out in the heat
- avoid physical exertion in the hottest parts of the day
- wear light, loose fitting cotton clothes
- make sure you take water with you, if you are travelling

Unusual levels of UV are also being recorded in the UK at the moment – with the strength of the UV in some spots being as high as that in Cyprus and Gibraltar. This has prompted warnings that people should take extra care in the sun at the moment and should keep an eye on PHE's [UV monitors](#).

Met Office Chief Meteorologist Frank Saunders said

With [high pressure](#) building from the south west and warm air being drawn up from the Azores, much of England will see very warm or hot weather this weekend and into early next week. Daytime temperatures will widely be in the mid to high twenties with some central and southern parts reaching the low thirties. It will also feel warm and humid overnight.

[News story: CMA confirms changes to merger investigations in smaller markets](#)

In January, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) [consulted on raising the threshold for markets](#) where mergers might not warrant investigation.

The CMA has a duty to refer mergers for an in-depth, phase 2 investigation if they could lead to a substantial lessening of competition (SLC). However, in certain circumstances it may not refer a merger, such as if it believes the relevant market is of insufficient importance.

The exception to the duty to refer is designed to avoid investigations where the costs involved would be disproportionate to the size of the market concerned. It enables the CMA to reduce the burden on companies and better target its resources for protecting consumers and businesses. The CMA can choose not to apply this exception (see notes).

After receiving support for its proposed changes, the CMA will now raise the figure for markets generally considered as sufficiently important to warrant a merger reference from above £10 million to above £15 million. It will also change the figure for markets generally considered not sufficiently important to warrant a merger reference from below £3 million to below £5 million.

Where the size of the market is between these figures, the CMA will continue to assess whether the expected harm resulting from the merger would be materially greater than the cost of an investigation.

It is expected that the changes will reduce the number of mergers that are

subject to investigations – including those subject to initial phase 1 examination.

Further details including the new guidance and a summary of the responses received are available on the [consultation page](#).

Notes

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law.
2. The [current guidance](#) was issued by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) in 2010 and adopted by the CMA in 2015.
3. The exception is not available in relation to any market or markets if the CMA believes that merging parties could in principle offer a solution to the CMA's concerns via undertakings in lieu of a reference. The CMA will also take account of the wider implications of its decisions in this area, and will be less likely to exercise its discretion, and therefore more likely to refer, where the merger is potentially replicable across a number of similar markets in a particular sector.
4. Enquiries should be directed to press@cma.gsi.gov.uk or 020 3738 6798.
5. For information on the CMA see our [homepage](#), or follow us on Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

News story: Aerospace Wales Forum hosted by DECA

The Forum is the trade association for companies operating in the aerospace and defence sectors in Wales and exists to provide the best service it can in promoting its members' companies and capabilities, providing access to events, networking opportunities and industry expertise. DECA is a full member of this Forum.

Rachael Blackburn, the newly appointed Operations Director for the Aerospace Wales Forum, opened the meeting agenda that included a question and answer session from the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, Ken Skates AM as well as presentations from Dickie Davies, Deputy Director Welsh Government, Rhodri Evans, Price Waterhouse Cooper and Colin Sirett, CEO Advanced Manufacturing and Research Centre

Geraint Spearing, DECA's Chief Executive also gave a presentation and capability overview to the Forum saying,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to DECA. Through events like this we are committed to developing partnerships and engagement with as many companies as possible. This also allows us to increase DECA involvement within the wider community and welcoming you all here today is a great step towards these goals.

Winning the F-35 assignment is tremendous news and has provided a new lease of life for DECA; a lot of our work involves the repair, maintenance, overhaul and upgrade of legacy equipment and F-35 provides us with an exciting next chapter to continue our long history.

Dickie Davies presented details of the current opportunities for Welsh Government funding saying,

We are here for you and to support and sustain business in Wales and the UK going forward and we are working to deliver an outstanding package of support. Three years ago, if I had said that we would have Aston Martin at St Athan employing 700 people you would have laughed and so would I, but we are actually there and we are growing.

Rhodri Evan, Cyber Security Lead at Price Waterhouse Cooper gave an interesting presentation on the importance of cyber security within industry. He detailed the impact of attacks and their effect, to not only business operations, but also how an attack can seriously affect the supply chain. Rhodri also detailed the new levels of cyber security protection that businesses will have to comply with.

Following on from the speakers, Ken Skates, Assembly Member, Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, National Assembly for Wales held a Q&A session taking questions about rail and road infrastructure, apprentice schemes, trade tariffs, the devaluation of the pound, research and development investment and the implications of Brexit. He spoke to the forum saying,

I am pleased to be with you all here today. We are inevitably proud of our aerospace industry and the announcements of job creation in Wales. Wales as a whole is building on a very strong foundation and we are keen to make sure we find common ground to take advantage of and ensure that Welsh strategy dovetails with the UK's industrial strategy and the great news of F-35 assignment for DECA. It gives me great pleasure to work with you and I am looking forward to the future.

News story: Cleantech startups set sights on US market

The businesses, which all have an innovation that can benefit the environment, went on an [Clean + Cool Mission](#) this week (10 to 17 June 2017).

The mission is backed by Innovate UK and [Long Run Works](#). It supports early-stage, high-potential companies to connect with opportunities through being part of an organised programme. This means they are able to explore cross-border opportunities and find faster routes to their target market.

Innovative UK SMEs

All of the businesses were selected to take part by a panel of judges. The panel was made up of representatives from Clean + Cool, Innovate UK, Department for International Trade, Knowledge Transfer Network, Greenhouse PR, PwC, Silicon Valley Bank, Volans, Whitefox Technologies and Women in Cleantech & Sustainability.

Businesses on the mission include:

- [Aceleron](#), which produces low-cost remanufactured battery packs from used lithium ion batteries
- [Arborea](#), whose carbon bio-converter 'bionic leaf' tiles enable photosynthesis to happen in the built environment
- [Bowman Power Group](#), a provider of electric turbo compounding technology, that improves the efficiency of gas and diesel-fueled engines in industrial stationary power generation
- [BuffaloGrid](#), which gives people in off-grid locations the ability to charge their phones and access internet services through remote solar-powered hubs
- Cellular Agriculture, a company looking to change how protein is produced for food consumption through tissue engineering technology
- [CCell](#), which has pioneered a wave energy, delivering more power while weighing less. Potential users include sea-water desalination plants and remote inhabited islands dependent on diesel generated electricity.
- [Gravitricity](#), which is developing grid-scale energy storage system that uses gravitational potential to store electricity
- [Green Fuels](#), the biodiesel equipment manufacturer that converts waste oils and fats into biofuels, such as jet fuel
- [H2GO Power](#), a University of Cambridge spin-out that uses solid-state, controllable hydrogen storage and generation for fuel cells
- Hexigone Inhibitors, which is developing environmentally-responsive organic and metallic coatings that are protected from degradation
- [Kelda Technology](#), whose digital shower system improves water efficiency to use 50% less water
- [Meteor Power](#), which is developing a new electric, high-performance motorcycle

- [Perpetual V2G Systems](#), producing power systems that harvest energy from vehicles that would be otherwise lost and store it onboard to be used later
- Rotaheat, which has pioneered compact technology that converts mechanical rotational energy to heat fluids at over 120C
- [SEaB Energy](#), whose patented anaerobic digestion systems in shipping containers generate clean energy from organic waste
- Senergy, which designs and manufactures integrated polymer solar thermal panels. It is now part of [Lloyd's Register](#)
- [SOMI Trailers](#), using a novel truck trailer design to to utilise the space underneath and carry 31% extra pallets
- [Stickyworld](#), a Software as a Service (SaaS) platform to collect and sort ideas, consult on proposals or engage and educate different stakeholder groups
- [Tevva Motors](#), which has developed electric range-extended vehicles that lower emissions and operational costs
- [Topolytics](#), which combines mapping, machine learning and geospatial analytics to make industrial waste visible, verifiable and valuable

Connecting innovators

Ian Meikle, Director – Infrastructure Systems, Innovate UK says:

Clean + Cool is a great example of the role Innovate UK plays in connecting innovators with the right partners they need to succeed. The Mission tackles the human challenges to innovation, helping early stage CEOs grow their ambition, profile and network, while improving their pitch and insight.

Engineering success

This is the sixth Clean + Cool mission. Previous missions have resulted in success, including UK engineering company Whitefox Technologies.

Through 2 missions to San Francisco and Brazil, they were able to make connections and gain knowledge of the biofuels industry and legislation in the US. This led to them pitching their solutions to US biofuel producer Pacific Ethanol. They now have a commercial deal, and are receiving interest from other companies in North America and Europe.