

Press release: Waste site operation to protect workers and the environment

The Environment Agency has joined forces with the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) in the North East to carry out combined visits to check waste sites aren't flouting important legislation.

This ongoing multi-agency approach aims to improve working practices on regulated sites.

During the last series of visits at the back end of 2016, staff attended 13 sites across the region, with more visits proposed for the early part of the New Year.

To date the joint initiative has focused on sites that recycle, process or store waste metal, such as scrap vehicles and general waste metal. Operators use a variety of processes and equipment to strip, cut and burn waste to extract the key metal and components, work which has the potential to expose workers to risks to health and safety.

The aim of these visits is two-fold; to make sure the sites are operating within the conditions of their Environmental Permit to protect the environment and community, while ensuring the health and safety of workers isn't put at risk.

The Environment Agency's Ruth Tyson, Waste Team Leader, said:

We manage our permitted sites every single day to ensure they are operating within the law, to protect the environment and to minimise impact on the local community.

Health and safety is paramount when our officers are visiting sites and officers regularly contact HSE if they feel a site is unsafe.

These joint operations are a really good opportunity to share knowledge with other agencies and mean we look at the site from different perspectives, ensuring any issues impacting on the environment and community can be looked at together with site safety.

Inspector Victoria Wise from the Health and Safety Executive added:

An average of 7 people are killed each year in the waste industry, this includes members of the public. The main causes of death are people being run over or struck by a moving vehicle or something unstable collapsing on them.

A high number of workers in this industry are also exposed to processes that cause irreversible ill health conditions. During the last joint initiative HSE found 8 sites visited to be in significant contravention of health and safety law with 7 Enforcement Notices served.

Joint operations such as this mean we can work alongside the Environment Agency to make sure those responsible for the sites are not exposing workers, members of the public and the environment to harm from the operations they undertake.

[Steering the economy through the turbulent times ahead is going to require the Government to be much bolder – Clive Lewis](#)

Clive

Lewis MP, Labour's Shadow Business Secretary, commenting on the launch of the Government's new industrial strategy, said:

"We welcome the Prime Minister's talk of government taking a 'new, active' role in backing businesses, but what we've heard today is full of rhetoric and thin on detail.

"From business rates to Brexit, many of businesses' most pressing concerns are currently going unanswered. Unless the Government puts a lot of flesh on these bones this will be a strategy of spin rather than substance.

"All the signs so far are that the Government is not prepared to put its money where its mouth is. The money offered for skills falls far short of reversing the cuts to adult education since 2010, for example, while the "cash boost" for the North is a fraction of the budgets of Labour's RDAs.

"For all the fanfare, reversing the economic damage done by the Tories and steering the economy through the turbulent times ahead is going to require the

Government to be much bolder.”

[News story: Air pollution advice to the public](#)

Widespread moderate and high [air pollution levels](#) are currently being measured across many parts of the UK due to still and foggy weather conditions, with some isolated pockets of very high pollution mainly across southeast England but also possible for some urban areas of Northern Ireland, central and eastern England.

Some very high levels are also expected, mainly across southeast England but also possibly for some urban areas of Northern Ireland, central and eastern England. Air pollution is expected to remain low across Scotland.

Current air pollution levels are due to the continuing high pressure and associated light winds across the UK.

During periods of high air pollution adults and children with lung problems, and adults with heart problems, should reduce strenuous physical exertion, particularly outdoors, and particularly if they experience symptoms. People with asthma may find they need to use their reliever inhaler more often. Older people should also reduce physical exertion.

Anyone experiencing discomfort such as sore eyes, cough or sore throat should consider reducing activity, particularly outdoors.

For those parts of the country forecast to have very high levels of ambient air pollution, Public Health England is advising people to reduce physical exertion, particularly when outdoors and especially if they experience symptoms such as a cough or sore throat. Adults and children with lung problems, adults with heart problems, and older people, in areas where very high levels are recorded should avoid strenuous physical activity. People with asthma may find they need to use their reliever inhaler more often.

Light winds and foggy conditions are expected to continue through Wednesday, especially across southern and eastern parts. This will lead to the ongoing risk of areas of moderate air pollution levels, along with isolated pockets of high levels. Meanwhile across the north and west increasing winds should lead to air pollution returning to low levels.

These low levels are expected to spread to all parts during Thursday and Friday as stronger winds extend east across the UK.

For the latest forecasts and health advice, please visit the [Defra UK Air website](#) and alerts for high levels of air pollution are issued by Defra via

the Air UK Twitter account [@DefraUKAir](#).

Further information:

- The 5-day forecast of predicted air pollution levels is continually updated on the UK Air website, with advice from Public Health England to allow members of the public, particularly those who are most likely to be affected by air pollution, to take action.
- We also work with health charities to make sure vulnerable people are aware of any periods of low air quality.

News story: Chief of the Defence Staff strengthens UK – Romania Defence ties

He today welcomed to London General Nicolae-Ionel Ciucă, Chief of the General Staff of the Romanian Armed Forces, to discuss mutual interests and strengthen Defence ties. This follows Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon's [announcement](#) last year that the UK will send RAF Typhoon aircraft to Romania in support of the NATO Southern Air Policing mission.

General Ciucă and the Chief of the Defence Staff discussed the UK and Romania's partnership as members of NATO, UK deployments to Romania this year, and possible trade opportunities.

Chief of the Defence Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach said:

The UK shares an important Defence relationship with Romania, both bilaterally, and as part of our membership of NATO.

I was pleased to welcome General Ciucă to the UK, and continue to recognise the key role Romania plays within the Alliance, including their commitment to increase defence spending to meet the 2% of GDP target this year.

To enable the UK's contribution to NATO Southern Air Policing, RAF Typhoons from RAF Coningsby will be based at Mihail Kogălniceanu Airbase for up to four months in 2017, the Defence Secretary said at the end of last year.

Additionally, as part of multinational NATO exercises, British land forces will deploy to Romania for various exercises this summer, demonstrating the Alliance's commitments on the south-eastern flank. Defence Engagement in 2017 will also include a Royal Navy Type 45 Destroyer visit to a Romanian port.

Chief of the Defence Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach added:

Our deployments this year by land, in the air, and at sea, underline the UK's commitment to working within NATO alongside our Romanian friends.

The UK-Romania relationship was further strengthened by a [visit](#) last year by then Romanian Minister of National Defence Mihnea Motoc, who was hosted by the Defence Secretary.

During his visit General Ciucă is also due to visit the Northwood Headquarters, where he will meet senior UK military personnel from the Joint Forces Command and speak to Romanian officers based at the NATO Allied Maritime Command.

[News story: Chief of the Defence Staff strengthens UK – Romania Defence ties](#)

He today welcomed to London General Nicolae-Ionel Ciucă, Chief of the General Staff of the Romanian Armed Forces, to discuss mutual interests and strengthen Defence ties. This follows Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon's [announcement](#) last year that the UK will send RAF Typhoon aircraft to Romania in support of the NATO Southern Air Policing mission.

General Ciucă and the Chief of the Defence Staff discussed the UK and Romania's partnership as members of NATO, UK deployments to Romania this year, and possible trade opportunities.

Chief of the Defence Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach said:

The UK shares an important Defence relationship with Romania, both bilaterally, and as part of our membership of NATO.

I was pleased to welcome General Ciucă to the UK, and continue to recognise the key role Romania plays within the Alliance, including their commitment to increase defence spending to meet the 2% of GDP target this year.

To enable the UK's contribution to NATO Southern Air Policing, RAF Typhoons from RAF Coningsby will be based at Mihail Kogălniceanu Airbase for up to four months in 2017, the Defence Secretary said at the end of last year.

Additionally, as part of multinational NATO exercises, British land forces will deploy to Romania for various exercises this summer, demonstrating the Alliance's commitments on the south-eastern flank. Defence Engagement in 2017 will also include a Royal Navy Type 45 Destroyer visit to a Romanian port.

Chief of the Defence Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach added:

Our deployments this year by land, in the air, and at sea, underline the UK's commitment to working within NATO alongside our Romanian friends.

The UK-Romania relationship was further strengthened by a [visit](#) last year by then Romanian Minister of National Defence Mihnea Motoc, who was hosted by the Defence Secretary.

During his visit General Ciucă is also due to visit the Northwood Headquarters, where he will meet senior UK military personnel from the Joint Forces Command and speak to Romanian officers based at the NATO Allied Maritime Command.