

Environmental and Waste Management Group



June 2019 Newsletter

LEGISLATION, REGULATORS, GUIDANCE & CONSULTATIONS

Air pollution evidence review

Public Health England (PHE) has published a review of evidence on how to improve air quality in the United Kingdom, while health secretary Matt Hancock has pledged to cut emissions from the NHS. “We cannot underestimate the very real impact that dirty air - this slow and deadly poison - is having on our lives, our health and our NHS,” he said. “This review will help us map out how much disease is caused by dirty air and what steps we are taking to prevent this - something which is at the heart of our work to help people live longer, healthier lives.”

Aside from current impacts, the review will consider the number of new cases of disease that the Clean Air Strategy could prevent, according to the agency. Air pollution is the biggest environmental threat to health in the UK, with between 28,000 and 36,000 deaths a year attributed to long-term exposure. There is strong evidence that air pollution causes the development of coronary heart disease, stroke, respiratory disease and lung cancer, and exacerbates asthma. In May last year, PHE estimated that 2.4 million cases of disease would result by 2035 if current levels of air pollution persist. Meanwhile, around 50,000 cases of coronary heart disease could be avoided if fine particulate concentrations were cut by only one microgram per cubic metre, the agency concluded.

The review informs local and national government on actions to improve outdoor air quality and health. (Read more: gov.uk)

ATP 12

A new Adaptation to the Technical and scientific Progress (ATP) of the CLP (Regulation (EU) 2019/521) has been published. ATP12 takes into account the sixth and seventh revised editions of the GHS that introduce a new hazard class for desensitised explosives and a new hazard category, pyrophoric gases, within the hazard class flammable gases.

This new regulation comes into force by the 17th October 2020 and changes that affect waste classification may be anticipated to be included in the revised editions of both the UK (WM4) and the European guidance, sometime in the next 12-18 months. (Read more: chemicalwatch.com)

Waste industry looks to tackle Lithium-Ion battery fires

Sector-led guidance is being drafted to assist waste management companies in handling lithium ion batteries to prevent fires at waste sites. Both the Environmental Services Association (ESA) and the AATF (Approved Authorised Treatment Facility) Forum – which represents treatment facility operators in the WEEE sector – are working on projects to reduce the risk of fires linked to Li-Ion batteries at their members' sites. According to ESA, of the 510 fires reported by its members across the UK in 2017-18, a quarter (25%) were attributed to Li-Ion batteries. (Read more: letsrecycle.com)

'No time to waste'

A new report has revealed that one person is dying every 30 seconds in developing countries from diseases and illnesses caused by plastic pollution and uncollected rubbish dumped or burnt near homes. (Read more: wasteaid.org)

Reports on effectiveness of radon remediation measures published

The radioactive gas, radon, is the single largest source of radiation exposure to the UK population – in both homes and workplaces – the level of which is inherently linked to the indoor environment. Exposure to radon is the second most important cause of lung cancer, after tobacco smoking (with which it has a strong synergy), and a significant cause of lung cancer for non-smokers.

The effectiveness of PHE's current general advice to homeowners on radon remediation, and the effectiveness of specific measures that have been requirements of Building Regulations since 1993, have been confirmed by two recent reports from the agency's Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards (CRCE). (Read more: gov.uk)

INCIDENTS AND PROSECUTIONS

Recycling company fined after worker crushed to death

A Liverpool recycling company, Centriforce Products Limited, has been fined £120,000 after one of their employees was fatally crushed by falling plastic bales in 2017. An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had failed to store waste plastic bales securely in such a way as to prevent the risk of collapse. The company had also failed to carry out a suitable assessment which would have identified risks to the safety of employees located within the danger zone of unstable stacks. Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Rohan Lye said: "This appalling incident could so easily have been prevented if [the] employer had acted to identify and manage the risks involved, and put a safe system of work in place." (Read more: hse.gov.uk)

Waste management company fined after employee killed

Northumberland-based Sanders Plant and Waste Management Limited have been fined £500,000 after an employee was fatally injured when he was struck by a reversing JCB loading shovel in 2015. The vehicle, driven by another employee, was loading waste into both a trommel (a large waste separation and sifting machine) and a parked haulage vehicle. During the course of this operation the vehicle struck a site operative, who died at the scene.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Laura Catterall said, “The HSE investigation found an inadequate assessment of the risks of vehicle movements in the waste shed and a lack of segregation of vehicles and pedestrians. There are more than 5,000 accidents involving transport in the workplace every year, and, like in this case, sadly, some are fatal. A properly implemented transport risk assessment should have identified sufficient measures to segregate people and vehicles and provide safe facilities.” (Read more: [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk))

Waste management company fined after worker injured

Viridor Waste Management Limited was prosecuted after a worker’s hand was injured by defective hydraulic cutters in 2017. The worker had reported that the equipment was defective but procedures to make them safe were not followed and the worker was injured when moving them. The company pleaded guilty and was fined £133,000 and ordered to pay costs.

HSE inspector Catherine Lyon said after the hearing: “The life changing injuries caused by this accident could have been avoided if the procedure for the safe lock-off and isolation of equipment had been followed. Employers should ensure their safety procedures remain effective by monitoring their use and checking that they are being fully implemented.” (Read more: [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk))

Suspended sentence for farmer who admitted illegally burning fridges and animals

A Norfolk farmer who had collected and burned hazardous waste including fridges, freezers and dead animals despite Environment Agency (EA) warnings, has been given a 12 month prison sentence, suspended for two years, and ordered to pay costs, etc., of c. £18,000. The EA prosecutor commented that the farmer had “deliberately and audaciously flouted the law”. After the hearing EA officer Naomi Daniel said: “Burning waste saved the cost of legal disposal and put the environment at real risk. Burning fridges and freezers releases climate-changing chemicals and pollutes the atmosphere.” (Read more: [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

Illegal waste operation leads to prison term, fines and compensation payments

A man has been jailed for 12 months for the illegal storage of more than 5,300 tonnes of mixed waste wood at a site in Great Staughton, Cambridgeshire in 2014. Another second man involved in the illegal activity has received a suspended prison term and Biowood Recycling Limited, which organised the deliveries of waste to the site, has also been fined and ordered to pay more than £300,000 compensation to the landowner who paid to clear the waste.

After the hearing, the EA’s enforcement team leader Phil Henderson said: “The illegal and uncontrolled storage of combustible waste at this location gave considerable cause for concern to both local communities and the authorities alike so we are pleased with the penalties imposed by the court.” He also paid “tribute to the affected landowner who acted to remove the waste minimising risk to the public and via proceeds of crime legislation has now been rightly compensated.” (Read more: [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

Waste companies fined for sub-contracting to fly-tippers

Two Essex waste companies received fines and charges of over £45,000 after sub-contracting waste removal to a third-party that subsequently fly-tipped the waste. (Read more: [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

27 illegal waste sites uncovered across the East of England

EA and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) officers visited more than 50 suspected illegal waste sites across Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Leicestershire in a single day in May, finding half were breaking the law. Evidence gathered from the visits will be used against those breaking the law.

Illegal waste activity is estimated to have cost more than £600m in 2015 in England alone. However, over recent years, the EA has made great strides in tackling waste crime; more than 5,400 were stopped between 2011 and 2017 and an average of two sites are shut down every day. (Read more: gov.uk)

OTHER TOPICS OF INTEREST

Sickness absence increasing in manufacturing

Make UK, the manufacturers' organisation, has published its latest Absence Benchmark, an annual survey of days missed by employees due to sickness in the manufacturing industry. The statistics gathered showed that the overall absence rate increased slightly from 2.2% in 2017 to 2.3% in 2018.

The average number of days a year lost to sickness absence per employee also increased slightly from 5.0 days in 2017 to 5.3 days in 2018. Within those figures the survey also highlighted manual workers to have a higher average absence, of 6.8 days, against non-manual workers, 3.9 days a year. (Read more: shponline.co.uk)

Scotland's deposit return scheme

Scotland's new Deposit Return Scheme will include aluminium and steel cans as well as drinks containers made of glass and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic with a 20p deposit as part of plans to combat climate change.

The ambitious scheme is based on successful international equivalents and will be widely accessible, with all shops which sell drinks offering deposit refunds to customers. (Read more: gov.scot)

MACE – Single Use Plastics Workshops

Mace is reducing the 3,000 tonnes of plastic waste it generates every year and its aiming to reduce its consumption of single-use plastics by 20% on sites and corporately by 80% through its 'Time to Act' initiative. Single use plastics workshops are being held on sites with the workforce to understand the impact and identify ways for reduction through packaging. (Read more: ccsbestpractice.org.uk)

Last turbine installed at Scotland's biggest offshore wind farm

The last of 84 turbines has been installed at Scotland's largest offshore wind farm. Once operational later this year, the £2.6bn Beatrice Offshore Windfarm Ltd (Bowl) project will generate enough power for more than 450,000 properties.

The wind farm site is situated about eight miles (13km) off the east Caithness coast in the Moray Firth. It is the fourth-largest offshore wind farm in the world, and it has taken three years to install the turbines. (Read more: bbc.co.uk)

UK's first 'environmentally friendly' road on housing development

A housing developer in Scotland, Springfield Properties, has taken a major step towards making its developments more environmentally friendly after becoming the UK's first housebuilder to use waste plastic to build a road on a housing development in Elgin. The section of road accounts for 20 tonnes of recycled plastic, the equivalent to 17,042 plastic bags or 6,000 plastic bottles, which would otherwise have been consigned to landfill or incineration. (Read more: pbctoday.co.uk)

Viridor to build 'groundbreaking' £65m plastic recycling plant

Viridor has announced a project which will harness the electricity created from non-recyclable waste at its £252m energy recovery facility at Avonmouth to power a new £65m plastic recycling plant. (Read more: pbctoday.co.uk)

IOSH 2019

For the practitioners, the leaders and the innovators in safety and health; the global conference for safety and health professionals, 16-17 September 2019. (Read more: ioshconference.com)