

Court orders waste site to be cleared after investigation

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A company and its director have been given a month to clear an illegal waste site or risk further court action.

They've also been ordered to pay fines and costs of more than £20,000 after an Environment Agency investigation into the operation in South Yorkshire.

Concept Investments Limited, of London Road, Sheffield, and its director, Austin Fitzgerald, 65, of the same address, both appeared at South Yorkshire Magistrates' Court for sentencing on Wednesday 15 April.

Both had previously pleaded guilty in February to allowing an illegal waste site to operate on land the company owns known as 'the Former Stanley Works', Rutland Road, Sheffield.

The company was fined £8,000, ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £2,000 and costs of £5,442, while Fitzgerald was sentenced to a 12-month community order with 140 hours of unpaid work, and was ordered to pay costs of £5442 and a victim surcharge of £114.

He must also clear the site by 18 May and if he fails to do this he will be brought back before the courts.

Image shows waste on the Sheffield site

Waste criminals 'damage communities'

Ben Hocking, Area Environment Manager for the Environment Agency in Yorkshire, said:

It's clear that Fitzgerald and the company were well aware of what was happening on that land, and they repeatedly ignored our requests to stop operations and clear the waste.

Waste criminals damage our communities and we are cracking down across the sector on those flouting the regulations.

This should serve as a warning for landowners that if you allow illegal waste activity to take place on your land we will take action.

The court heard that Concept Investments is the landlord of the site, and allowed a waste site to operate without an environmental permit.

The Environment Agency first visited the site on 7 July 2022 and found a large amount of mixed waste, including fridges and other electrical items and inert waste such as soil and stones.

In a follow up visit later in the year, the Environment Agency told the occupier he could not store waste without a permit, and gave him six weeks to clear it.

In January 2023, officers inspected the site and found none of the waste had been cleared, and in fact new waste had accumulated. The Agency subsequently served a formal notice requiring the site to be cleared by 5 June, 2023. The notice was not complied with.

The Environment Agency made more requests for waste to stop being brought on to the site and for it to be cleared.

In late 2024 and early 2025, complaints were received about the burning of waste, and the operator was advised by Sheffield City Council to cease burning, which was impacting on local residents.

In March 2025, Fitzgerald was interviewed by the Environment Agency, and said that he inspected the site regularly. Another visit in April 2025 revealed there was still waste on the site.

Another man charged in relation to the same site has pleaded not guilty to operating a regulated facility without an environmental permit, with a trial listed for 11 February 2027.

Further background

Full charges:

Concept Investments Limited

Between 6th January 2025 and 23rd April 2025 on land known as 'the Former Stanley Works', Rutland Road, Sheffield, Concept Investments Limited did knowingly cause or knowingly permit the operation of a regulated facility, namely a waste operation, except under and to the extent authorised by an environmental permit.

Contrary to regulation 12(1) and regulation 38(1)(b) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.

Austin Fitzgerald

Between 6th January 2025 and 23rd April 2025 on land known as the Former Stanley Works, Rutland Road, Sheffield, Concept Investments Limited did knowingly cause or knowingly permit the operation of a regulated facility, namely a waste operation, except under and to the extent authorised by an environmental permit, and the offence was committed with the consent or connivance of, or was attributable to the neglect of, Austin Fitzgerald, a director of the said company.

Contrary to regulation 12(1), regulation 38(1)(b) and regulation 41(1) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/court-orders-waste-site-to-be-cleared-after-investigation>