

## **Vast majority of EPA licensed sites are compliant – IWMA**

### **Complaints, Prosecutions and Investigations continue to fall**

**9 December 2015** The Irish Waste Management Association (IWMA) welcomes the publication of the EPA Report on Waste Enforcement which shows that the vast majority of the 169 licensed sites in the waste sector operate in compliance with the approx. 200 conditions that are contained in their operating licences.

The Report shows that:

- Compliance investigations in the sector are down 30% from the previous year
- Complaints against waste facilities continue to fall year on year, and are down 70% from a peak in 2009
- The number of successful EPA prosecutions against licensed waste facilities was down from 6 in 2013 to 1 in 2014 (key statistic trend page 8).

Conor Walsh, Secretary of the IWMA said: “EPA Licensed sites are amongst the most heavily regulated when compared with international best practice and all licensed sites must comply with over 200 licence conditions. The number of complaints in relation to licensed facilities continues to reduce as a result of significant investment by the industry. The majority of operators of licensed sites continue to work with the EPA to achieve the maximum level of compliance possible”.

Mr. Walsh said that fire safety is a concern but that increased guidance from the various authorities has led to increased fire safety measures being put in place. “While any fire incident is regrettable, fire safety issues were identified at less than 5% of the 169 licensed sites. Three of the six fires reported were in local authority sites”, he said.

“The reduction in landfill disposal has led to an increase in exports of waste for incineration abroad, but this is a temporary solution as significant further infrastructure is currently under development in Ireland which is expected to be commissioned in 2017”, said Mr. Walsh.

The IWMA is critical of the fact that the EPA enforcement role is restricted to licensed sites and is again calling for the EPA powers of regulation to be extended to allow it to investigate unlicensed operators.

“We strongly support regulation of the waste sector and welcome the vigilance of the EPA in addressing issues of non-compliance. We want to see the same vigorous attention from the EPA on unauthorised operators who do not comply with the laws governing the treatment and disposal of waste”, he said. “The IWMA has consistently called for such sites to be regulated by the EPA to ensure consistency and a level playing field within the sector. The current inconsistent approach by the authorities facilitates criminal activity in ‘enforcement blindspots’. The EPA Report cannot address such criminal activity because it is beyond the Agency’s remit. This is a significant flaw in the system which must be changed”.

**Ends.**

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