

Incident Summary

**Tyre Fire at;
Newgen Recycling Ltd,
Gascoigne Woods Mine,
Sherburn-In-Elmet.**

16th January 2014



1.0 Details of the Incident

On Thursday 16th January 2014 the Service received a call to attend a quantity of tyres on fire, in the open, at Newgen Recycling plant near Sherburn-in-Elmet. Two fire appliances were initially mobilised to the incident. On arrival, it became clear that the fire had begun to spread rapidly and crews escalated the operational resources required at the incident to involve further fire appliances and specialist resources. At the height of operations a total of eighteen fire appliances and ten special appliances from North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and Humberside Fire Services were committed to the incident.

The site is used as a recycling plant for waste vehicle tyres and there was a large quantity of tyres stored on the site. A number of buildings nearby contained valuable recycling equipment with an estimated value of several million pounds, some of the buildings also contained quantities of hazardous gas cylinders and various fuels. Also on the site were two high voltage electricity sub stations, one of which became involved in the fire due to its close proximity. To the south side of the site is a railway line which is in regular use for passenger transportation, the rail operators were notified of the incident and advised to caution the trains. Due to the wind direction the railway was unaffected throughout.

Sherburn Aero Club occupies part of the industrial estate and flights were restricted due to the smoke plume direction. Initially the fire was confined to an area containing approximately 20 tonnes of tyres, however as the fire took hold, this spread quickly to the majority of the tyres stockpiled.

Initially crews tackled the fire using 3 small hose reel jets until a more satisfactory and permanent water supply could be established. On-site contractors using mechanical plant equipment worked to try and move unburned tyres and create fire breaks between the burning tyres. Initially this tactic proved successful, however due to the direction of the wind and fire spread, the fire breaks were breached and the fire involved other areas of the tyre stock pile. In addition, the water supply route and access slip road onto the site became in danger of being cut off and involved in the fire due to the close proximity to unburned tyres which were at risk of becoming involved.

A decision was taken to use a High Volume Pump to draw water from a nearby pond which provided a substantial water supply and enabled the setting up of large 'water jets to protect nearby buildings'. This action was taken to protect the recycling plant buildings located adjacent to the fire which then allowed crews to withdraw to a safe area until the fire had begun to subside. Regional stocks of firefighting foam were ordered onto the scene. A short test of fighting the fire using foam was carried out before a decision was taken not to use it, in large part, to environmental considerations.

The use of water curtains between the fire front and two adjacent buildings worked effectively and the buildings were saved from the fire, with the water supply remaining largely unaffected and almost all polluted water was able to be contained on the site. Following this a decision was taken to scale down the incident and to maintain 6 fire appliances onsite to ensure that the fire did not spread to surrounding premises. This was scaled down further until a 'stop' message was sent on the 18th February 2014.

The Environment Agency were present on site at an early stage of the incident and worked in collaboration with the Incident Commander to consider the most appropriate methods to mitigate the effects of polluted water run off entering freshwater courses.

Remotely, as part of established local resilience arrangements, a series of multi agency Tactical Coordination Group Meetings were instigated, chaired by North Yorkshire Police and involving additional representatives from the Local Authorities, Emergency Planning, Public Health England, Yorkshire Ambulance Service, Met Office and the Environment Agency. The Tactical Coordination Group Meetings took place on a daily basis and continued until the incident was considered to be effectively resolved and entered into the recovery phase.