

Incident at Newington Rail Depot

In February 2003 Network Rail reported a pollution incident at Newington Road Depot, Ramsgate, to the Environment Agency

A fault on an electronic switch on a rail de-icer train lead to an accidental spill:

- The faster the train went the less de-icer came out
- When the train slowed down loads of de-icer spilled out on the tracks



The spill site was on the Chalk aquifer and right above Source Protection Zone 1 and 2. Rapid action was required to protect the groundwater and prevent chemicals reaching the drinking water supply

The de-icer was made of two substances:

- Paraffin wax – much of this stayed at the ground surface as it solidified in the cold weather
- Kerosene – this soaked in to the ground, through the railway ballast and in to the Chalk rock



The rail tracks were taken up

- **The contaminated ballast and Chalk was dug out**
- **The contaminated material was taken away to an appropriately licensed waste site**
- **Tests were carried out on the sides and bottom of the excavations to make sure all of the contamination had been removed**
- **The hole was carefully filled with clean materials and new ballast, before replacing the tracks**

Thanks to the quick action taken by Network Rail the de-icer had not soaked far in to the Chalk so the groundwater was not contaminated







Prompt use of the Environment Agency's 24 national Incident Hotline protected the groundwater resource and the drinking water supply

Because Network Rail

- Reported the incident promptly
- Followed Environment Agency guidance
- Took on responsibility for the incident
- Took on the costs of the emergency work
- Prevented an impact on the groundwater
- Protected drinking water
- Learnt from the accident
- Implemented improvements

the Environment Agency took no enforcement action

Report any new pollution incidents or activities that you think might be harming the water environment to the
**Environment Agency's 24 hour national
Incident Hotline 0800 807060**