

Fly-tipping: what can be done?...

Fly-tipping – that is to say, the illegal dumping of waste - is a serious issue facing the container self-storage industry. It is the one of the scourges of Britain today - according to the UK Department for Government Statistical Service, it is costing local authorities more than £13 million in clean-up costs annually.

Across the country more than one million incidents of fly-tipping are recorded each year, with private land owners having to foot a bill of £1,000 on average to clean up a lorry load of fly-tipped materials.

The container self-storage industry is regrettably not immune from the problem.

It ranges from dumping on or near the site boundary, rental of the container with the intention of dumping items such building materials, tyres, fridges and drums of chemicals. And domestic renters who, over the years, have decided that the stored goods have no value or – maybe due to some personal issue - walk away the store. In addition, there are business renters that that are in the throes of bankruptcy proceedings or simply wish to dispose of items and taking a self-store is an easy way to do it.

Tighter controls by local authorities over fly-tippers is, of course, necessary; but it incentivises those bent on illegal activity to find soft targets.

The question therefore is how NOT to be a soft target

Site condition

A scruffy site attracts the attentions of the fly-tipper. Ensure the site is fenced, CCTV installed and the site kept tidy. If you must have them, control your or renters skips so that they don't attract rubbish to be left in or alongside; where used skips should be lockable. Inspect sites regularly.

Removing visible dumps

If you are the victim of a fly-tipper, remove the waste promptly - because it attracts additional dumping.

Tracing

If there is a possibility to identify the fly-tipper, report to the authorities. Bill them for removal of items. However: in cases like this, local councils and police often treat it as a “victimless crime” and take the view ‘why are you contacting us?’

Credit rating

Robust credit rating of new clients and payments by bank direct debit deter the unscrupulous renters

Insurance

CSTA are investigating a possible self-storage group insurance which could help mitigate the effect on the business.

...and Good Advice from a Self-Storage Operator

We asked CSTA Member Ean Parsons, who runs 11 self-storage facilities under the U Hold the Key brand (<https://www.uholdthekey.co.uk/>), to share his experience.

He gives the following advice:

Prevention – you must:

- Include in T&C's
- Ensure controlled access
- Undertake regular site inspections
- Erect visible signage
- Avoid skips - a skip will attract people to leave items in or next to the skip so best not to allow them on site whether operated by the site operator or by a customer - unless strictly controlled and definitely lockable.

Traceability – you should:

- Keep accurate customer records
- Install CCTV – this is a big an advantage

Disposal – to offer a well-kept site, you must have:

- A policy of disposing of fly-tipping first - and tracing afterwards (i.e. don't leave the items/rubbish lying around while the culprit is found)
- A developed recycling procedure, so that items and rubbish can be correctly disposed of. Inevitably fly-tipped items include awkward ones to dispose of e.g. fridges, tyres.

Problem ownership – you should

- Keep in mind that when on private land, it is the land-owners/lease-holders problem - councils won't enter private land to deal with fly-tipping

Share your Experiences and Know-How

If you have any experiences and suggestions that you wish to share with other Members, please send to: patrick@containa.org