

Mossmorran Easter Flaring Update - SEPA announces further Permit variation

I to you in your capacity as Secretary of Kingseat Community Council to update you on the recent flaring incident at Mossmorran. The unprecedented number of complaints we received about flaring in April is a clear message that the impacts on people's lives is a major concern. SEPA has heard this message powerfully and clearly.

Full regulatory investigation

On Sunday 21 April SEPA received complaints from members of the public about flaring from the Mossmorran Complex which continued until Saturday 27 April.

A formal regulatory investigation into April 2019 flaring is underway which will take time to complete. The nature of a live investigation means there is some information that cannot be provided as quickly as people would like.

We appreciate this can be frustrating, but ask that you understand that gathering and protecting potential evidence is of the utmost importance.

SEPA officers have already contacted some members of the public who contacted us to record the impacts this flaring had on them. Understanding the real impacts provided by local communities, families and individuals is vitally important and this work is ongoing.

Following completion of the investigation SEPA will use its enforcement policy to decide what action should be taken. SEPA has a range of enforcement options including serving notices requiring specific action to be taken through to the submission of a report to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service recommending prosecution of an environmental offence.

Requirement for a programme of monitoring

SEPA today (17 May 2019) announced that further permit variations will be served on ExxonMobil Chemical Limited and Shell UK Limited to design a programme of monitoring to assess the impacts of flaring on the local community and the environment - including air quality, noise and vibration.

We expect there to be a high level of community engagement in the development of the programme.

The companies will be expected to consult widely to ensure:

- monitoring will provide the information required to carry out the necessary impact assessment;**
- the most appropriate technology and contractors are used to develop public confidence.**

SEPA will scrutinise the proposed programme and make it publicly available. Providing it is suitably robust, we will require the companies to implement it. The date by which these proposals must be submitted will be contained within the Variations.

Best Available Techniques (BAT) Assessments

As part of the Permit Variations served by SEPA in 2018, both ExxonMobil Chemical Limited and Shell UK Limited were required to complete BAT Assessments to consider the ways in which they can prevent, or where that is not practicable, reduce the impact of flaring.

These were received by SEPA by the deadline and are available to view on the public register via our Mossmorran Hub at www.sepa.org.uk/mossmorran

While SEPA has conducted an initial review of the BAT Assessments, these are technical documents and we need sufficient time to analyse them in depth. However, these assessments provide a significant opportunity and it is vital that both operators take this opportunity to deliver real changes.

SEPA will require the operators to take action to ensure they are using Best Available Techniques and any flaring is undertaken without unacceptable impacts on the community.

Working with partners

SEPA is working with a number of public agency partners in relation to the regulation of the Mossmorran complex in Fife. We will continue to liaise with the Health and Safety Executive, Fife Council, Health Protection Scotland and NHS Fife to share whatever information we can to ensure the impacts are understood and the regulatory controls are appropriate and effective.

The Mossmorran and Braefoot Bay Independent Air Quality Monitoring Review Group will also continue to play a key role and SEPA recently carried out a three month programme of continuous air quality monitoring to provide information to this group and its members. Further details are available in our April 2019 monitoring report, published on the Mossmorran Hub.

Monitoring during the recent flaring event

- On 21 April SEPA staff attended locations around Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly to witness the flaring and experience the impacts. This work happened throughout the flaring event.
- Our air quality and noise monitoring team were deployed in the area with SEPA CEO, Terry A'Hearn on 22 April. Further monitoring was carried out during the flaring event.
- Information on the air quality monitoring SEPA carried out is available in our April 2019 monitoring report available at www.sepa.org.uk/Mossmorran

Stay informed

Further information is available on SEPA's dedicated Mossmorran hub at www.sepa.org.uk/mossmorran