

Official Statistics Publication for Scotland – Waste from all sources

31 March 2020

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has published Official Statistics today (31 March 2020) which provide details of waste from households, construction and demolition, and commerce and industry for calendar year 2018.

These are known as the Waste from all Sources statistics and they are published at:

Data on waste are collected to monitor policy effectiveness, and to support policy development, particularly commitments in the Scottish Government's Making Things Last – A Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland.

The figures are accurate at the time of publication, however data may be updated if further revisions are necessary. Normally these revisions will be published concurrent with the next official release.

Ends

Greenhouse gas emissions from Scottish businesses fell by over 50% since 2008

20 March 2020

Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory (SPRI) data for 2018 published by SEPA. SPRI is a database of annual mass releases of specified pollutants to air, water and land from SEPA regulated industrial sites.

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- Emissions of pollutants from SEPA regulated businesses fell between 2008 and 2018.
- Sustained downward trend in greenhouse gas releases over the past ten years.
- Both carbon dioxide and methane, the main greenhouse gases, saw reductions of over 50% over those ten years.
- A 3% increase in greenhouse gases between 2017 and 2018 reflecting the realism of a transition economy and demand from the grid from the 2018

'Beast from the East' severe weather event.

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) today (20 March 2020) published its [Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory](#) (SPRI) data for 2018. SPRI is a database of annual mass releases of specified pollutants to air, water and land from SEPA regulated industrial sites.

The data released shows Scotland's long-term pollutant emissions from SEPA regulated businesses fell between 2008 and 2018 as the country continues its transition to a more sustainable future. Pollutant releases have decreased across most major pollutant groups over the past ten years.

Some of the decreases, such those of greenhouse gases, are partly due to the ongoing greening of the grid. Others are directly related to environmental policy and new technologies such as investment in renewables, river basin management plans and landfill gas recovery systems.

Overall reductions in greenhouse gases

The two largest contributing pollutants in terms of number of sites reporting and emissions are carbon dioxide and methane which drive the overall greenhouse gas trend. The closure of Cockenzie and Longannet coal-fired power stations are largely responsible for the reduction of carbon dioxide by over 13.8 Megatonnes (54%) since 2008.

Levels of other greenhouse gases (Methane, nitrous oxide and sulphur hexafluoride) have also fell over those ten years. The most significant of these reductions is the fall in methane emissions. While methane does not remain in the atmosphere as long as carbon dioxide, it is initially far more impactful on the climate because of how effectively it absorbs heat. The reduction of over 50% since 2008 is a consequence of the capture of gas at landfill sites and the reduction of organic waste going to these sites.

Pollutant	Emissions (kg)			Change between years	
	2008	2017	2018	2017 to 2018	2008 to 2018
Carbon dioxide	25,700,000,000	11,500,000,000	11,900,000,000	up 3%	down 54%
Methane	56,800,000	32,500,000	27,800,000	down 14%	down 51%
Nitrous oxide	317,000	89,600	88,900	down 1%	down 72%
Perfluorocarbons (PFCs)	12,000	4,360	4,410	up 1%	down 63%
Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)	1,770	1,050	3,520	up 235%	up 99%
Sulphur hexafluoride	1,030	134	107	down 20%	down 90%
Total (to 3 significant figures)	25,800,000,000	11,500,000,000	11,900,000,000	up 3%	down 54%

Energy transition

Reflecting the realism of a transition economy and demand from the grid from the 2018 'Beast from the East' severe weather event, SEPA regulated sites recorded a 3% increase in greenhouse emissions. While renewable generation in Scotland has increased by almost 70% since 2008**, the 2018 increase in greenhouse gas emissions is largely due to a 0.96 Megatonne rise in carbon dioxide emitted from Peterhead Power Station, operated by Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE).

SSE Peterhead, a gas-fired thermal facility is designed to respond quickly to market changes, maintaining security of supply. Now the only large scale thermal power station in Scotland, the site ran for roughly twice as many hours in 2018 in respond to demand, impacting its emissions from the previous year.

CCGT stations, like Peterhead, are generally considered as least polluting large scale thermal generation technology and are necessary in the shift to renewable energy generation.

Increases in emissions

The intensive livestock sector showed an increase in methane emissions during 2018 which is relatively large in terms of the sector (15%) but is equivalent to a 0.0006% increase in the total quantity of SPRI greenhouse gases released. The increase is due to the permitting of four new facilities and capacity increases at several existing sites.

Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs – also known as F-gases) are commonly used in refrigeration. 2018 saw a 235% increase which is equivalent to a 0.00002% increase in the total quantity of greenhouse gases released. This was due to accidental releases from two regulated sites, with SEPA action leading to investment in alternative refrigeration technologies being introduced by October 2020.

Year-to-year changes in pollutants can often be attributed to changes at a few sites, due to increases or decreases in production, changing source products and new sites opening. All pollutants have a reporting threshold, below which sites do not need to report a value to SPRI. An increase in production can move a site's releases above the threshold, giving the appearance of a large increase.

Other increases are mostly related to an increase in production or variations in combustion fuels. There were also 16 more sites reporting in 2018.

Terry A'Hearn, Chief Executive of SEPA, said:

"The most successful countries in the 21st century will be those that thrive within our planet's means to support them. Through our regulatory strategy, One Plant Prosperity, SEPA is helping Scottish business grow sustainably while reducing their environmental burden.

"The annual SPRI data from regulated sites is a very visual demonstration of the progress we've made as a nation in the last decade as a result of our climate leadership. It also reflects the realism of a transition economy

where there will be movement in individual metrics such as energy.

“Scotland’s globally ambitious climate change and circular economy strategies continue to drive systemic change in business practice and are vital to the link between economic, environmental and social wellbeing.”

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- * Rise from 3,353 MW in 2008 to 11,036 MW in 2018 according to Scottish Renewables – scottishrenewables.com/forums/renewables-in-numbers/
- ** Mass emissions from SEPA regulated industrial sites reporting SPRI pollutants above threshold limits. SPRI has a [threshold value for each pollutant](#) – substances considered to be environmentally significant and of interest to the public. These thresholds are set at a UK level (reflecting EU levels) and are designed to capture 95% of the UK’s total emitted pollutants for the particular substance.

The SPRI data can be accessed on SEPA’s website at www.sepa.org.uk/spri

- There were 866 sites reporting above thresholds in 2018, compared to 850 in 2017.
 - Since 2001, owners or operators of facilities that have met the SPRI reporting requirements have reported on an annual basis. Data from SPRI is used to fulfil the reporting requirements of the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (E-PRTR).
 - Using the tool to compare facilities or sectors provides a general overview of the total amounts of pollutants released or waste transferred. However, direct and causal inferences should not be made because detailed knowledge of processes, installed abatement technologies and other installed emission reduction technologies and practices must be known before this type of analyses can be accurately and definitively performed. Further, the types and amounts of source material, management methods, production patterns, etc. must also be known.
 - SPRI is a searchable database of annual mass releases of specified pollutants to air, water and land from SEPA regulated industrial sites. It also provides information about off-site transfers of waste from these sites. It does not assess the compliance of the facilities or the health and environmental impact of the releases. Site compliance can be found in [SEPA’s Compliance Assessment Scheme results](#).
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Scottish business environmental compliance over 90% for fourth year in a row in latest SEPA data

19 February 2020

Scottish business environmental compliance was over 90% for the fourth year in a row in the latest figures published by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). 90.5% of Scottish regulated business sites were assessed as compliant (Excellent', 'Good' or 'Broadly Compliant') in 2018. 76.2% of Scottish regulated sites (almost 4,000 sites) rated as excellent.

- Scottish business environmental compliance over 90% for fourth year in a row in latest SEPA data.
- 90.5% of Scottish regulated business sites were assessed as compliant in 2018.
- Scotch Whisky, distilling and brewing achieve 95.5% compliance.
- Scotland's oldest brewery showcases sustainability success story and pledges carbon-neutral by 2025.
- SEPA firmly focused on tackling poor performance at ExxonMobil Chemical Limited Mossmorran.
- SEPA establishes new 'Enforcement Unit' to fast-track tackling serious non-compliance.

Scottish business environmental compliance was over 90% for the fourth year in a row in the latest figures published by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). 90.5% of Scottish regulated business sites were assessed as compliant (Excellent', 'Good' or 'Broadly Compliant') in 2018. 76.2% of Scottish regulated sites (almost 4,000 sites) rated as excellent.

Compliance Band	Number of licences assessed 2018	2018 %
Excellent	3,905	
Good	686	Compliant 90.5
Broadly Compliant	43	
At Risk	156	
Poor	282	Not compliant 9.5
Very Poor	51	
Overall	5,123	100

SEPA's Regulatory Strategy 'One Planet Prosperity' is clear – every Scottish business will comply with the law and SEPA will work to ensure as many as possible go even further. SEPA's Compliance Assessment Scheme (CAS) rates an operator's environmental performance against its licence conditions. The annual results enable SEPA to take a targeted approach which focuses on high risk operations and under-performing sites more frequently than compliant or

low risk activities.

Scotch Whisky, distilling and brewing achieve 95.5% compliance.

In 2018, Scotch distillers were present in twenty-two of Scotland's thirty-two local authorities – up from 15 local authorities in 2010. Scotland's brewers meanwhile were located in sixteen of Scotland's local authority areas.

Taken together, Scotch Whisky, distilling and brewing achieved 95.5% compliance in 2018, continuing the strong performance of the sectors. Compliance increased from 93.2% to 95.5% across the 176 sites assessed in the period, with a further reduction in the number of non-compliant sites.

Carbon Neutral Tennent Caledonian Breweries

In addition to achieving high levels of environmental compliance, SEPA worked to support Scottish businesses recognising the economic and environmental opportunities of sustainability.

Scotland's leading brewer, Glasgow-based Tennent Caledonian, achieved a further 'Excellent' rating for environmental compliance in the reporting period, marking a five-year run of strong performance. The brewer, which operates Scotland's oldest surviving brewery at Duke Street, Glasgow, went further and in 2019 announced ambitious plans to be carbon neutral by 2025.

The brewery, founded in 1740, has 'locked in' sustainability to its business model, including launching a flagship consumer awareness campaign, being the first brewer in the UK to join the UK Plastics Pact and committing to eradicating single-use plastic by 2021 and all plastic use by 2025. The business also invested £14m in site environmental performance including an anaerobic digestion plant with carbon capture, improving wastewater quality by 80% and also generating bio-gas which contributes 5% of the site's energy needs.

Tackling poor performance in non-renewable energy

While many of Scotland's industrial sectors, such as non-renewable energy and chemicals, achieved over 90% compliance as a whole, poor performance at complex industrial sites continued to impact local communities across the reporting period.

ExxonMobil Chemical Limited, the operator of the Fife Ethylene Plant, achieved a 'Poor'* Compliance Assessment Scheme rating for the second year in a row due to flaring at the Fife site during 2018. INEOS FPS Limited's (Forties Pipeline) site in Grangemouth, rated as unsatisfactory since 2014, and was rated as 'Very Poor' in 2017 and again in 2018.

ExxonMobil Chemical Limited, Mossmorran

ExxonMobil Chemical Limited was rated as 'Poor'* in 2018, with SEPA working to address the root causes of 'unacceptable' flaring. In April 2018, SEPA served Final Warning Letters due to 'preventable and unacceptable' unplanned

flaring in 2017 to both operators at the Mossmorran Complex in Fife.

Communities experienced further unplanned flaring from ExxonMobil Chemical Limited in October 2017, March 2018 and again in May 2018.

With ExxonMobil Chemical Limited the subject of a current live regulatory investigation, nearing completion, SEPA has varied operating permits at Mossmorran. The operating permit variations served on ExxonMobil Chemical Limited and Shell U.K. Limited require both operators to achieve 'Best Available Techniques' in the shortest timeframe possible. With a £140 million investment announced by ExxonMobil Chemical Limited, noise reducing flare tips will be installed this year by ExxonMobil Chemical Limited and by Shell U.K. Limited in 2021.

ExxonMobil Chemical Limited has committed to optimising timescales to install new ground flares – which will significantly address impacts from flaring, with Shell U.K. Limited recently submitting their own project plan, currently being reviewed by SEPA for the future use of ground flares.

Together these measures will reduce the impacts on local communities when flaring is necessary. Flaring, an important safety feature of industrial facilities, will become the “exception rather than routine” and new infrastructure will address the issues that cause most disturbance to local people.

INEOS FPS, Grangemouth

INEOS FPS Limited's (Forties Pipeline) site in Grangemouth was rated as unsatisfactory since 2014 and 'Very Poor' in 2017 and again in 2018.

Operated by BP Exploration until October 2017, the site was unsatisfactory due to flaring and the unavailability of ground flares at the installation, in breach of Permit Conditions as well as breaches of the effluent consent.

A Final Warning Letter was issued by SEPA in 2018 and the company has been working constructively with technical specialists to secure the adoption of Best Available Techniques. Further to ongoing liaison with the business, SEPA will shortly issue permit variations requiring the installation of new ground flare systems by January 2022.

Terry A'Hearn, Chief Executive of SEPA, said:

“Every day, SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland's environment helping communities and businesses thrive within the resources of our planet. We call this One Planet Prosperity. As part of our response to the climate emergency we're clear, environmental compliance is non-negotiable. Every Scottish business will comply with the law, and we'll work to ensure as many as possible will go even further.

“We're pleased to recognise the exceptionally high standards of compliance from Scotland's distillers and brewers. What's more we're delighted to raise a glass to iconic Scottish brands like Tennent's Lager who are locking in the environmental and economic opportunities of business sustainability.

“Whilst recognising successes, we’re also clear on our strategy to tackle consistent non-compliance. We’ve already refocused resource on tackling poor performance at complex industrial sites and will this year start to see the first in a series of significant investments by operators that aim to improve environmental outcomes for communities. That, combined with a newly established dedicated enforcement unit, will focus on the most serious non-compliance.”

Martin Doogan, Group Engineering Manager at C&C (owners of Tennent Caledonian Breweries), said:

“We’re extremely pleased to receive an ‘Excellent’ rating for environmental compliance for the third year in a row – reflecting Tennent’s long-term commitment to sustainability.

“Six months ago we announced the most ambitious environmental initiatives in the company’s history, undertaking significant investment to build an anaerobic digestion plant and carbon capture capability at Wellpark, alongside a pledge to completely eradicate plastics from our consumer packaging as well as becoming carbon neutral and sourcing all of our energy from renewables in the next five years.

“As Scotland’s oldest business and largest brewery, we can’t be complacent, continuing to identify innovative ways to further minimise our environmental impact-sustainability is firmly embedded at the core of everything we do. It is our intention to deliver lasting positive change so we’re proud that all of the hard work undertaken so far continues to see our environmental compliance rated as ‘Excellent’ by SEPA.”

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

(*) CAS rating under appeal by ExxonMobil Chemical Limited.

SEPA’s full Compliance Assessment Scheme data can be seen on our website at <http://apps.sepa.org.uk/compliance/>


Total licence numbers

Since 2014, operators in all major regulatory regimes have been included in the Compliance Assessment Scheme. A significant number of lower risk activities are not assessed annually, and inspection frequency varies from once every two to once every five years. As a result the number of licences assessed and reported each year will vary.

There can be a discrepancy between the overall figures in our release and totals when added from individual sites on our website. This is because the details of a number of sites we regulate are not published for National Security reasons but are counted in our overall figures.

- Not all Radioactive Substances Act licences are published online. As well as the compliance data for nuclear and radioactive substances sites published, we also regulate smaller authorised radioactive sources, many of which are used in the offshore oil industry and onshore in industrial processes. These are not published online.
- There are authorisations under the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations and permits under the Pollution Prevention & Control (Scotland) Regulations held for National Security sites that are also not published.

Salmon return to Renfrewshire river for first time in more than 100 years

 18 February 2020

Salmon have been spotted swimming upstream in an Inverclyde river for the first time in over 100 years following the successful adaptation of a redundant industrial weir.

Work has been carried out at Gotter Water Weir, in Quarrier's Village, by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) to lower the existing height of the weir and increase the downstream water levels by installing two pre-barrages to encourage migratory fish to travel upstream.

Installed as part of the industrial revolution over 100 years ago to control the river's flow, the now redundant weir has always been a complete barrier to migratory fish such as Atlantic salmon, denying them access to around 9km of upstream habitat.

Following the completion of the works, salmon – a declining species whose continued existence depends on being able to migrate home – were spotted swimming over the weir at the start of December much to the delight of all involved with the project.

The works have been carried out as part of the Water Environment Fund (WEF), a Scottish Government funded project managed by SEPA which aims to repair damaged urban rivers and enhance the local environment for often deprived communities. It also aims to improve fish stocks by removing barriers that have closed rivers for generations to migrating fish.

Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham said: "Salmon is an iconic species for Scotland and declining numbers of wild salmon returning to Scottish rivers is of great concern to the Scottish Government. So we are hugely supportive of SEPA's work through the Water Environment Fund to remove this barrier to migratory fish – and delighted to see signs of early success.

“As we celebrate Scotland’s Year of Coasts and Waters in 2020, it’s important to reflect not just on the beauty of Scotland’s natural assets, but on the vital wildlife and biodiversity that our water environments support.”

Terry A’Hearn, SEPA CEO said: “Our urban rivers are an important natural resource for communities but have a legacy of harm and many are under increased pressure during the climate emergency. Restored rivers can create new opportunities to boost recreation, tourism, active travel in areas, leading to economic opportunities for local businesses and communities.

“Every day SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland’s environment helping communities thrive within the resources of our planet – we call this One Planet Prosperity. We are delighted to see this project is already proving to have made a positive impact on the local environment.”

Rob Mitchell, River Restoration Specialist with SEPA, said: “Rivers and wild fish stocks are a vital part of our ecology in Scotland and it is fantastic to see the benefits of the Gotter Water project in action. This marks the first time since the weir was built that migratory fish have been able to access the habitat upstream to spawn.”

The work was carried out by SEPA through the Scottish Government’s Water Environment Fund (WEF) will upgrade the Water Framework Directive classification of the water body to ‘good’ overall status, allowing salmon to spawn and will bring social and economic benefits

WEF projects aim to increase the lengths of habitat accessible to native fish, helping endangered populations to become resilient to climate change and other pressures whilst creating new opportunities for angling, tourism and recreation, bringing economic benefits and recreational opportunities to river communities.

John Blair, President of Bridge of Weir River Angling Club, said: “It has been a great pleasure to be involved in this project. It was unbelievable when I watched salmon ascending through the salmon ladder at the start of December proving what a great success this project has been.”

The Gotter Water Weir project is already having a ripple effect on the local community with the Clyde River Foundation considering the Gotter Water for inclusion in their Salmon Homecoming education initiative.

The Clyde River Foundation, an environmental charity based at The University of Glasgow, has been monitoring the fish community upstream of the Gotter Water Weir annually since 2003 and has previously found no evidence of salmon there.

Catchment Manager, Dr Willie Yeomans, said: “We are delighted to hear the news about salmon being spotted swimming upstream. The return of salmon to the River Clyde and its tributaries is one of the real good news stories of our time

“The water quality of the river has improved and the success of returning fish populations is down to initiatives such as this. Our data were used to

partly make the case for improving fish passage at the weir and we look forward to using our surveys from 2020 onwards to confirm the extent of the recovery.”

ENDS

Notes to editor

The Gotter Water rises in the hills close to Muirshiel Country Park in Renfrewshire, around 13 miles east of Glasgow. It is a tributary of the River Gryffe which runs from the Gryffe Reservoirs near Wemyss to its confluence with the Black Cart Water near Johnstone.

Water Environment Fund (WEF)

SEPA manage the Water Environment Fund of up to £7.5M annually on behalf of Scottish Government. The Fund’s priorities are (a) repairing damaged urban rivers, to enhance the environment for often deprived communities and (b) improving fish stocks by removing barriers that have closed rivers for generations to migrating fish.

Together with our partners, we have completed, or are part way through, delivering 15 projects that will enhance the lives of the surrounding communities. WEF is key to delivering solutions on behalf of Scotland to respond to the system failure of fish. To date we have opened up more than 1,000km of rivers to salmon and other fish species

Everyday SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland’s environment, helping communities and businesses thrive within the resources of our planet. We call this One Planet Prosperity.

Further information about WEF can be found at www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/water-environment-fund/

SEPA River Restoration

Rivers are a vital part of our landscape and a great asset to Scotland. They provide wildlife corridors, opportunities for recreation and wellbeing and resources for farming, drinking water, beverage production and hydroelectricity.

Like many of our natural resources our rivers are under pressure and in places, damaged. This includes historic changes, such as straightened and embanked channels which are cut off from natural flood plains, heavily concreted urban river corridors with little chance for the creation of wild habitats, a lack of attractive green spaces, and rivers made impassible to fish migration by barriers.

The Water Environment Fund enables rivers to be restored by:

1. Repairing damaged urban rivers often in deprived areas to enhance the

environment for the communities that live there. We are creating attractive and accessible green river corridors within towns and cities that can be used for active travel and recreation, improving health and wellbeing. We help rivers contain flood waters and create new opportunities for local businesses and suitable development.

2. Removing and easing barriers to migrating fish and improving vital fish stocks. We are increasing the lengths of habitat accessible to native fish, helping to improve endangered populations and creating new opportunities for angling, tourism and recreation, bringing economic benefits and recreational opportunities to river communities. SEPA administers the Water Environment Fund on behalf of Scottish Government. SEPA works in partnership with local authorities, land and structure owners, fishery trusts and conservation bodies to deliver an annual programme of projects.

SEPA uses the Water Environment Fund to:

- Directly commission the removal or easement of redundant weirs by SEPA procurement of options appraisals, designs and groundworks;
- Contribute towards a partnership with Local Authorities for the restoration of urban rivers and surrounding green space.
- Compensation: Compensation may be provided for land owners/managers for income forgone due to giving over productive land to river restoration. River restoration compensation scheme

The Water Environment Fund is targeted on projects which will derive the greatest benefit to Scotland's rivers and neighbouring communities.

1. Improving fish migration past redundant structures

Owners of dams and weirs have a duty to allow fish migration. However, Water Environment Funds may be available to help owners remove an obstacle to fish passage where the weir or dam is no longer in active use, or not a commercial asset, including dormant or 'mothballed' assets. For local authority owners the Scottish Government may provide up to 75% of the groundworks costs to improve fish passage. Funds are not available for ongoing maintenance of completed restoration projects.

2. Improving river corridors

Working in partnership with local authorities, The Water Environment Fund will be used to create a better environment for wildlife and people. We will do this by restoring damaged river corridors to enhance the ecological value of the river and improve public amenity and well-being, including the reduction of flood risk.

Salmon

Atlantic salmon live in freshwater as juveniles but migrate to sea as adults before returning up river to spawn.

Atlantic salmon return to their native river, and even the same stretch of the river from which they were born, with amazing accuracy. This means that

many 'populations' of Atlantic salmon may exist within the same river.

Spawning usually occurs from November to December, but may extend from October to late February in some areas, particularly larger rivers.

The young fish begin to leave rivers for the sea in late spring, with most fish gone by June.

[‘Unplanned flaring’ during Mossmorran restart a reminder of why short and medium term solution critical says SEPA](#)

📅 14 February 2020

‘Unplanned flaring’ during ExxonMobil Chemical Limited’s Mossmorran restart is a reminder of why short and medium term solution are critical to addressing ‘unacceptable flaring’ said the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) today (Friday 14 February 2020).

- While elevated flaring is a possibility during restart it was not expected last night.
- Early indications that the near four hours of flaring was a result of a problem with one of the process units and reduced capacity of ground flares.
- SEPA understands restart likely to continue into the weekend and we will continue daily regulatory updates.
- SEPA hears clearly the level of community anxiety caused by Thursday night’s flaring event.
- Regulatory, noise and air monitoring continues across local communities.
- Initial data suggests no breach of UK Air Quality Standard.
- 28 SEPA Air Quality Reports, including weekly reports, available at sepa.org.uk/mossmorran
- SEPA focused on rapid conclusion of regulatory investigation to an evidential standard.
- Thursday night flaring to be reviewed following outcome of current investigation.
- A reminder of why short and medium term solutions are so critical.
- Noise reducing flare tips to be introduced in 2020 and 2021 and planning, design then delivery of new ground flare capacity afterwards.
- SEPA’s approach will address the investment required to end ‘unacceptable flaring.’
- Follow @ScottishEPA and @exxonmobil_fep for updates.
- Its important we understand community impacts.

- Please report pollution via our 24 Hour Pollution Hotline at www.sepa.org.uk/report

'Unplanned flaring' during ExxonMobil Chemical Limited's Mossmorran restart is a reminder of why short and medium term solution are critical to addressing 'unacceptable flaring' said the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) today (Friday 14th February 2020).

SEPA advised that early indications suggested that the near four hours of flaring was a result of a problem with one of the process units and reduced capacity of ground flares. The agency understands the restart is likely to continue into the weekend and SEPA advised it will continue daily regulatory updates.

The agency, which had regulatory, noise and air monitoring capabilities deployed across the incident, said it heard clearly the level of community anxiety caused by Thursday night's flaring event.

Initial data collected by the agency suggests no breach of UK Air Quality Standard. 28 SEPA Air Quality Reports, including weekly reports, available at sepa.org.uk/mossmorran

SEPA said it was focused on the rapid conclusion of its ongoing regulatory investigation to an evidential standard and that to avoid any delay, Thursday night's flaring would be reviewed following outcome of current investigation.

The agency advised that the situation was a reminder of why short and medium term solutions are so critical. The approach includes noise reducing flare tips being installed in 2020 and 2021 and planning, design then delivery of new ground flare capacity afterwards.

Chris Dailly, SEPA Senior Manager, Compliance & Beyond, said:

"Thursday's unplanned flaring during ExxonMobil Chemical's restart at Mossmorran is a real reminder of why short and medium term solutions are critical to addressing the root causes of unacceptable flaring.

"While elevated flaring is a possibility during restart it was not expected last night. Once again we heard clearly and powerfully the very real concerns and frustrations of local communities.

"We think it's important to be clear on the causes of the flaring in the final stage of this restart. We know people also want information on our monitoring. Since last year SEPA has had monitoring points around the site. Initial data suggests that whilst clearly there was elevated flaring, there was no breach of UK Air Quality Standard. We publish the data we collect on a weekly basis and now some 28 detailed reports are available.

"We accept that flaring is causing people worry, anxiety and stress. That's why our firm focus is on addressing the root-causes of 'unacceptable flaring' and making flaring an exception rather than routine, which is currently not the case. The short and medium-term investment we're requiring the operators to make, from noise reducing flare tips in 2020 and 2021 and planning,

designing then delivering new ground flare capacity will make a real difference to local communities.

“We appreciate communities want action, not words which is why we’re focused on rapid conclusion of regulatory investigation to an evidential standard and to the next steps in driving systemic change at Mossmorran. We’ll provide more information as quickly as possible and would encourage anyone impacted to report any concerns at www.sepa.org.uk/report so these are formally reviewed and considered by specialist officers.”