

Final warnings to Exxonmobil Chemical and Shell for environmental non-compliance

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Petrochemical companies ExxonMobil Chemical Ltd and Shell UK Limited have been served with Final Warning Letters by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) following an enhanced unplanned flaring event at the Mossmorran complex in Fife, during June 2017.

- Final warning letters served by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) to two of the nation's largest industrial operators served for environmental non-compliance.
- Full review commissioned of environmental permits to operate for both Mossmorran sites.
- Enhanced programme of air quality monitoring announced.
- SEPA Chief Executive tells senior ExxonMobil Chemical Ltd and Shell UK Limited executives "environmental compliance is non-negotiable."

In addition to Final Warning Letters, the environmental watchdog has commissioned a full review of the environmental permits to operate both sites, with a view to strengthening environmental compliance and reducing the impact of flaring on local communities. An enhanced programme of air quality monitoring has also been announced by the regulator, to inform relevant public agencies.

Following an intensive investigation by SEPA, which included formal statements from local residents, the regulator found that whilst flaring is an important safety feature in the event of a process fault, a series of maintenance failures led to elevated levels of unplanned flaring in breach of environmental controls between 12 and 18 June, following the breakdown of a condensate pump.

SEPA found residents were subject to considerable disturbance in their homes from noise, vibration and black smoke over the seven-day period in Summer 2017, during which a total of 74 complaints were received by the agency.

SEPA's Chief Executive, Terry A'Hearn met senior ExxonMobil Chemical Ltd and Shell UK Limited executives directly on site and was clear that "environmental compliance is non-negotiable."

Terry A'Hearn, SEPA's Chief Executive Officer, said:

"Every day, SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland's environment and compliance with Scotland's environmental rules is simply non-negotiable.

"The impact of unplanned flaring from Mossmorran last year was both

preventable and unacceptable. We're disappointed that both ExxonMobil Chemical and Shell UK caused an environmental impact on local communities which is why we've issued formal Final Warning Letters, have commissioned a full review of environmental permits to operate and an enhanced programme of air quality monitoring.

"It's clear that further actions are required by ExxonMobil Chemical and Shell UK to ensure the frequency and impact of flaring is reduced, but we're encouraged by how both companies have responded, committing to respond positively to a strengthening of environmental controls. We'll be working with the Health and Safety Executive, public health partners and communities to together both strengthen environmental controls and deliver powerful transparency over site operations."

While the Final Warning Letters brings to a close SEPA's regulatory investigation for June 2017, unplanned flaring events which took place in October 2017 and March 2018 are still under investigation.

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