

Mossmorran flaring community update

✘ 27 April 2019

On Saturday, 27 April, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency was informed by ExxonMobil Chemical Limited that elevated flaring had ceased. Exxon further advised ground flaring was continuing 'above normal levels' for a 'short period'*.

- SEPA informed by ExxonMobil Chemical Limited that elevated flaring had ceased. Exxon further advised ground flaring was continuing 'above normal levels' for a 'short period'*.
- Follows the announcement by SEPA on Thursday 25th April 2019 of a formal regulatory investigation.
- SEPA is continuing to maintain its full operational response including regulatory, air quality and noise monitoring across the weekend.
- A further update on monitoring results will be published early next week.
- SEPA will confirm receipt of the 'Best Available Techniques' (BAT) assessment by Exxon, due next week.
- Following technical review, SEPA will provide an update ahead of a planned community meeting, which SEPA will attend, on Friday 17 May.
- SEPA Chief Executive, Terry A'Hearn, will directly discuss the incident and the urgency of actions with ExxonMobil Chemical Ltd Plant Manager, Jacob McAlister, on Monday 29 April.
- A summary of that conversation will be made available.
- In addition to its community update, SEPA has today provided a further update to elected members.
- Over 750 complaints have now been received to date by SEPA's 24 hour Pollution Hotline, one of the highest number for any single event.
- SEPA will continue to make information available as quickly as possible, within the constraints of protecting evidence in a live regulatory investigation, on our dedicated online hub, www.sepa.org.uk/mossmorran.

The update follows the announcement by SEPA on Thursday 25 April 2019 of a formal regulatory investigation into the flaring from the Mossmorran petrochemical plant in Fife.

SEPA is continuing to maintain its full operational response including regulatory, air quality and noise monitoring across the weekend which will continue to inform its live regulatory investigation. A further update on monitoring results will be published early next week.

A 'Final Warning Letter' was issued to ExxonMobil Chemical Ltd in April 2018 regarding flaring which was found to be "preventable and unacceptable".

In addition to SEPA and Health and Safety Executive investigations in 2018/2019, a tightening of permit conditions and an instruction to conduct a

'Best Available Techniques' (BAT) assessment, SEPA will confirm receipt of the BAT assessment next week.

Following technical review, SEPA will provide an update on the assessment ahead of a planned community meeting, which SEPA will attend, on Friday 17 May.

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Terry A'Hearn, SEPA's CEO, said:

"Exxonmobil have advised that after six long days and nights for local communities, elevated flaring has ceased. They advise however that ground flaring will continue for what they describe as a short period.

"Whilst the elevated flaring may have stopped, our full regulatory, air quality and noise monitoring response will continue across the weekend and our formal regulatory investigation, announced on Thursday, is just getting started. Whilst the Mossmorran complex is a major industrial facility where this type of flaring is a legitimate safety mechanism, this is happening too often and the level and extent of flaring is wholly unacceptable.

"Understanding the impact of flaring provided by local communities, families and individuals is vitally important and, as such, we would encourage people to continue to report impacts directly to us online at www.sepa.org.uk/report or via our 24 Hour Pollution Hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

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(*) Exxon Mobil Chemical Statement, 08:00 hrs 27 April 2019

ENDS

Notes to editors

- SEPA served Final Warning Letters on both operators in April 2018 for

flaring in June 2017. This followed an intensive investigation by SEPA, which included formal statements from local residents.

- During the investigation SEPA 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 2017.
- 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.
- Permit variations were served on both operators in June 2018 requiring ExxonMobil Chemical Ltd and Shell UK Ltd to ensure they take all appropriate preventative measures against noise and vibration emissions through the application of 'Best Available Techniques (BAT)' and ensure that no significant pollution is caused.
- Both ExxonMobil Chemical Limited and Shell UK Limited are required to complete an evaluation of the 'Best Available Techniques (BAT)' due shortly, to prevent and, where that is not practicable, reduce emissions of noise, vibration and smoke associated with flaring.
- Shell UK Limited is not involved in the current flaring event.
- A full copy of our Mossmorran complex investigation update published in February 2019 is available on our Mossmorran Hub www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/air/air-quality/mossmorran-and-braefoot-bay-complexes/#investigationupdate
- The update includes links to copies of the Final Warning Letters, Permit variations and interim reports on the evaluation of Best Available Techniques.
- SEPA's [Enforcement Policy](#) sets out the intent and principles underpinning our approach to enforcement action. The intent behind the enforcement action is to:
 - secure compliance and change the behaviour,
 - stop or reduce the risk of harm arising from the non-compliance to an acceptable level.