

Operations at Preston New Road

Keeping you informed

Update 6
19 December 2018

As the regulators of the shale gas industry we are committed to keeping local people updated on our work at the Preston New Road site.

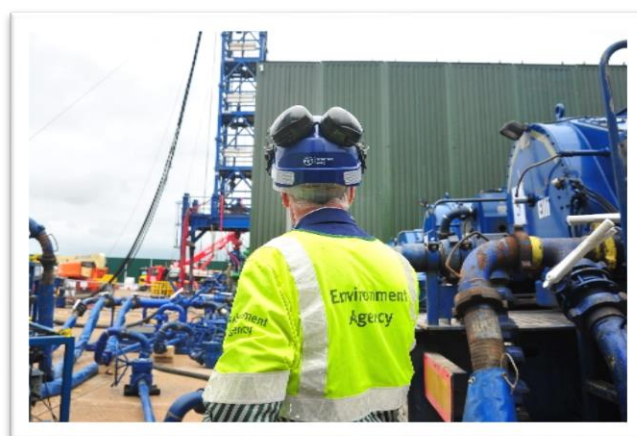
Seismic activity

Over the past few weeks, Cuadrilla has carried out further hydraulic fracturing at the Preston New Road site. A number of seismic events were recorded, including one of magnitude 1.5 on Tuesday 11 December. The regulators and the British Geological Survey received several calls from local people who reported feeling this event.

In line with the strict controls in the Hydraulic Fracture Plan (HFP) operations were paused. During pauses, the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) compares the location, magnitude and ground motion of these minor seismic events to the operator's approved HFP. Regulators checked data and information and were satisfied that there were no well integrity issues. The Environment Agency's assessment confirmed that there were no environmental permit boundary breaches.

Further seismic events were detected during hydraulic fracturing operations on Friday 14 December, including a magnitude 0.9 event. In line with the strict controls in the HFP, operations were paused for more analysis to be carried out.

To date the OGA has been satisfied that the seismic events have been in line with the geological understanding set out in the HFP and that the risk of induced seismicity is being appropriately managed.



Keeping you informed

Please visit our Citizen Space webpage to see the latest information from our audits, site inspections and reports from the operator.

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/onshore-oil-and-gas/information-on-cuadrillas-preston-new-road-site>

Our next update will be issued on Wednesday 16 January 2019

Environment Agency 24 hour incident hotline number:
0800 80 70 60



Site regulation

The Environment Agency has recently published information on our compliance work to the Citizen Space webpage.

This covers a site visit that we reported on in October, where a small amount of methane had been detected close to the site boundary. In reviewing the process management, we determined that the source was the use of tanks managing the fluid returned to the surface. Due to the low levels of methane recorded, we categorised this as a Category 4 (minor) breach of the environmental permit.

Inspectors also found that a flow meter measuring frack fluid injection on site did not have the correct certification in place. We have since agreed with the operator that their equipment does provide the same level of assurance as equipment with the certification. This has also been recorded as a minor (category 4) breach.

It is not uncommon for industrial sites to have minor non-compliances after sites inspections and audits. These breaches are primarily administrative and we are satisfied with the measures Cuadrilla has in place.

The Environment Agency will be auditing the site in the new year to assess Cuadrilla's leak detection and repair programme.

Cuadrilla has now completed hydraulic fracturing for 2018 and has started to remove hydraulic fracturing equipment from the site.

Judicial review

The Environment Agency were in the High Court on 29 November following a legal challenge from Friends of the Earth (FoE). The claim related to the Environment Agency's decision to allow Cuadrilla a number of changes to the environmental permit issued in 2015. The changes were agreed in December 2017 and covered new arrangements for flaring waste gas and for monitoring seismic activity and groundwater.

In addition, the variation potentially allowed more than one stage of hydraulic fracturing to be carried out per day, though without increasing the overall volume of hydraulic fracturing fluid that could be used by the operator. This led to a challenge from FoE on whether the Environment Agency needed to carry out a Best Available Techniques (BAT) assessment for the waste water from the site.

We do not yet have any information on the court ruling. We will include an update about this in our next newsletter.

Contacting us

Environment Agency

24 Hour hotline number 0800 80 70 60 or PNREnquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Health and Safety Executive at www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns.htm

The Oil and Gas Authority at oga.correspondence@ogauthority.co.uk