

Preston New Road Compliance with Permit Assessment Report 27.02.2019 _ Flare Operations

Additional Information

The above Compliance Assessment Report (CAR) date 27 February 2019 has been produced following our audit on flaring and gas management to assess compliance against the site's environmental permit conditions. The audit comprised both on-site inspection and off site technical evaluation and assessment of data, environmental monitoring results and submissions.

This CAR contains details on 3 non-compliances and below is some information about these.

- In January this year, Cuadrilla reported to us elevated levels of methane at Preston New Road. Our audit found that some venting of methane (releasing the methane unburnt) had occurred at this time. The resulting emissions had minimal to no impact on the environment and did not represent a risk to people. We scored this non-compliance as category 3.
- We also found that, contrary to the approved flare operation procedure for the site, the operator chose not to add the support fuel (propane). We scored this non-compliance as category 4, as having no impact on human health or the environment.
- The permit also requires the operator to undertake continuous methane concentration monitoring in flare feed gas. The operator monitored at a frequency of 30-minute intervals instead of 10-minute intervals as stated by their procedure. We scored this non-compliance as category 4, as having no impact on human health or the environment.

The elevated levels of methane detected in January are not exceptional when compared with the earlier, pre-fracking records at the site and remain at relatively low levels. We have estimated the amount of methane vented as between 2.7 - 6.8 tonnes. To provide some context, an average herd of dairy cows produces between 9-16 tonnes of methane emissions per year.

We require operators to meet the legally binding conditions set out in their environmental permits. In this instance we have issued a warning and sought to resolve the matter through providing advice and guidance to Cuadrilla. If the company continue to breach its permit conditions or if we identify more serious failings, then further enforcement action would be taken.