

We have developed this weekly update to help keep the community of Newcastle-under-Lyme, and wider area, up-to-date with developments around our regulation of Walleys Quarry Landfill.

Walleys Quarry Ltd is responsible as the operator for the hydrogen sulphide emissions escaping from its site. As the environmental regulator we are committed to making sure the operator tackles the problems at Walleys Quarry Landfill, to improve things for everyone, as quickly as possible. Our regulatory team continues to put pressure on the operator to take the necessary measures to resolve the hydrogen sulphide issues.

News in brief

Environment Agency launched investigation into alleged illegal waste activity at Red Industries sites

Following new information, the Environment Agency has launched an investigation into alleged illegal waste activities at sites operated by Red Industries Limited.

This comes after a period of increased regulation by the Environment Agency at Walleys Quarry Ltd, Newcastle under Lyme, where high levels of hydrogen sulphide have been causing issues for the community. Red Industries Limited is the parent company of Walleys Quarry Ltd.

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency said:

“The Environment Agency is formally investigating Red Industries and their associated companies following new information provided to us of alleged illegal waste activities.

We want to encourage anyone that holds any information pertinent to this investigation, to contact us confidentially on 0800 80 70 60.”

Points to note

- This is a formal investigation into alleged illegal activity, as such the Environment Agency will not be able to comment further on matters which could form part of any future legal proceedings.
- Some additional information was shared with the Environment Agency in October 2021.
- Walleys Quarry Ltd is responsible for the hydrogen sulphide emissions escaping from its site and as regulator the Environment Agency has exercised legal powers to require the operator to resolve the issue of unacceptable levels of emissions escaping from the site since it began earlier this year.

Judicial Review Appeal decision

There have been a lot of comments on social media about the decision of the judges to accept the Environment Agency's appeal and dismiss the claimant's cross-appeal.

This decision in the court of appeal last week in no way affects or changes our determination to tackle the problems at this site in the interests of the Claimant, the community and the environment.

The decision can be viewed here [Richards v The Environment Agency & ors - YouTube](#) and the Court's full reasoning will be made available in due course.

Our full statement about the appeal outcome can be seen in [last week's update](#).

Christmas publishing schedule

Our next edition of this weekly update will be available on 6 January 2022.

Our regulatory officers will however remain on duty monitoring air quality levels throughout the Christmas and New Year period.

Latest on our regulation

We last updated you in our weekly update on the [9 December](#) about our current expectations for how Walleys Quarry Ltd need to further reduce emissions of hydrogen sulphide from the site.

Walleys Quarry Ltd are currently planning for these activities which include:

- Permanent capping of the current active area when it reaches final height levels.
- Operate smaller tipping areas which can be swiftly capped to reduce the risk of emissions.
- Demonstrate how the gas infrastructure will be progressively upgraded in tipping areas to ensure gas extraction is maintained to reduce the risk of emissions.

We also required back up power for the gas utilisation plant to be available at the site. This action has now been completed by the operator.

Latest hydrogen sulphide levels

Last week (13 – 19 December) raw data collected from our ambient air mobile monitoring stations (MMFs) showed:

- The levels remained below the World Health Organisation's 24-hour average health guideline level (150µg/m³ or 107ppb) to protect against short-term health effects.
- They were above the World Health Organisation's 30-minute average odour annoyance guideline level (7µg/m³ or 5ppb) for the following periods of time:

MMF1 - Silverdale Cemetery = 0.9%

MMF2 - Silverdale Road = 0%

MMF6 - Newcastle-under-Lyme Fire Station = 3%

MMF9 - Galingale View = 18.5%

We are currently investigating the reason levels at MMF9 have increased to 18.5% for last week (from 2.4% the previous week).

It is important to note that this is raw data. This means the data is indicative. We do not rely upon raw data for our regulatory work, but instead rely on the Monthly Air Quality Monitoring reports, which is based on rectified data.

We do expect to see short term fluctuations in the concentrations of hydrogen sulphide leaving the site at times. The causes can include factors such as the temporary impact of improvement works being carried out on site and changes in the weather. In particular as we approach the colder seasons air temperatures start to drop. Landfill gas emissions will rise in the atmosphere less readily in colder weather and with less dispersion, the potential for causing odour nuisance is greater. By contrast, in warmer weather, when the gases are naturally more diluted due to the higher temperatures and rising air.

This means the improvements that have been carried out at Walleys Quarry Landfill, to reduce odour, could be less noticeable as we move towards the end of the year. However, it is important to note that despite short term spikes, the overall trend in the levels of hydrogen sulphide concentrations in the ambient air continues to reduce.

The amount of landfill gas captured and processed on site remains at a very high rate with CLP, the gas contractor running both engines on full power, generating around 2000 KWh electricity, with two enclosed landfill gas flares operational on a 24/7 basis.

Our action and the improvements we've required Walleys Quarry Ltd to take since March 2021 has seen a significant reduction in hydrogen sulphide escaping the site, but there is still more for Walleys Quarry Ltd to do in reducing hydrogen sulphide levels to those assessed to be safe by the UK Health Security Agency.

In total we received 400 odour reports this week (13-19 December). This is current data as of publishing this update and may increase as backlog reports are added to our reporting system.

We remain committed to continuing to use our regulatory powers to require Walleys Quarry Ltd to further control hydrogen sulphide emissions.

A new odour pollution reporting form for Walleys Quarry

We have developed a new online form to report incidents of odour coming from Walleys Quarry. This replaces our old reporting form which is now no longer in use. Most of the questions remain the same, but we have made some updates to make it easier to use, and more accessible.

When completing the new form, you will still receive a unique reference number each time you report an incident. You will still be able to make multiple odour reports. Using the form will be the easiest and quickest way for you to report odour from Walleys Quarry.

<https://report-walleys-quarry-smell.service.gov.uk/>

Contact us with your questions

We are not able to answer questions fully on social media, so if you have a question you can email us at enquiries_westmids@environment-agency.gov.uk.

To report odour please call us on 0800 80 70 60 or use our [online reporting form](#)

In future, we are planning to share some of the key questions people have emailed us, for everyone to access on these pages.

We are updating the information on this webpage regularly. To receive notifications, email your contact details to: Engagement_WestMids@environment-agency.gov.uk and we will add you to our mailing list.

See [Staffordshire County Council website](#) for information on public health impacts of odours in the Silverdale and wider Newcastle under Lyme area.

Walleys Quarry website: <https://walleysquarry.co.uk/>