

Walley's Quarry Landfill Site

09 December 2021

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 Walley's 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

Latest on our regulation

We've already instructed Walleys Quarry Ltd to carry out a series of works at Walleys Quarry to reduce hydrogen sulphide escaping the site to levels assessed to be safe by the UK Health Security Agency.

The overall trend in hydrogen sulphide data shows levels have reduced significantly since May 2021, and whilst this is good news, we know there is more to be done.

We required Walleys Quarry Ltd to submit plans for further improvements to landfill gas management procedures and for future capping. We assessed these plans and as a result Walleys Quarry Ltd is required to:

- Have robust plans for back-up power for the gas utilisation plant (GUP), to minimise the risk of hydrogen sulphide escaping if the GUP is without power
- Carry out 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.

Judicial Review appeal hearing

On 27 October 2021 the Court of Appeal granted permission for the Environment Agency to appeal aspects of the Judgment relating to the appropriate role of the Court when considering judicial review and remedies involving regulatory decisions. On 15 November 2021 the Court of Appeal granted permission for the Claimant to argue that the judge should have granted a declaration that the Environment Agency is in present breach of its obligations (known as a cross-appeal). The appeal will be heard on 14 and 15 December 2021. We anticipate the Court of Appeal will give its decision in January 2022.

Doorstep conversations

Following the latest Covid guidance set out by government, we are pausing our doorstep conversations for now. We'll review this again in the new year.

Latest hydrogen sulphide levels

Last week (29 November – 5 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 = 0.6%

MMF2 - Silverdale Road = 0.9%

MMF6 - Newcastle-under-Lyme Fire Station = 0%

MMF9 - Galingale View = 9%

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 Walley's 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 212 odour reports this week (29 November – 5 December).

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. Most of the questions on the form will 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. [Click here to report odour via the form.](#)

Publishing recent correspondence

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 every week. 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/>