

Walleys Quarry weekly update – 28 July 2022

The Environment Agency has prepared this weekly update to help the community of Newcastle-under-Lyme and the wider area keep informed about developments concerning its regulation of Walleys Quarry Landfill.

Walleys Quarry Ltd is the operator of the landfill site and it alone is responsible for the hydrogen sulphide emissions escaping from the site.

The Environment Agency is the environmental regulator. We require Walleys Quarry Ltd to meet its environmental obligations and resolve the ongoing odour issues at the landfill as quickly as possible.

News in brief – 28 July 2022

Regulatory activity

In February 2022 we told you that we had notified Walleys Quarry Ltd of our findings following an inspection on 14 January 2022. We explained that Walleys Quarry Ltd, like any other operator, had 28 days to challenge those findings.

Walleys Quarry Ltd did challenge our findings and we initiated a review of the company's representations and the content of the Compliance Assessment Report (CAR). We have decided that it is appropriate to revise the CAR on this occasion.

We have withdrawn one of the three Category 1 breaches identified, which is the breach of the odour condition. In order to score a non-compliance for odour it is necessary to track an odour from off-site to within the permitted boundary of the site, and identify the specific activities giving rise to that odour. On 14 January 2022 we were unable to do this, and so do not have sufficient evidence of the permit breach. The other two Category 1 breaches, which relate to management system deficiencies and failure to follow the landfill gas management plan, are unchanged.

If Walleys Quarry Ltd is not satisfied that its challenge to the CAR has been resolved, it can make an official complaint. We are unable to comment further on our decision before this process is concluded. The site remains in compliance band F in view of scores attributed to breaches on this and other occasions.

Permanent capping work in Phase 1 continues, with geomembrane capping being installed on the northern slopes to extend on from the existing cap. At an inspection on 20 July 2022, Walleys Quarry Ltd indicated it expected to complete this work by 01 August 2022. Geomembrane on the eastern flank of Phase 1 is being progressively covered with restoration soils.

Pipe fabrication works are underway onsite. Four additional vertical gas wells are being drilled in the week commencing 25 July 2022 to provide additional capacity in the southern flank, filling a gap in coverage. It is possible that the drilling may lead to a temporary increase in emissions of hydrogen sulphide. Once these wells are commissioned, they will facilitate an increase in gas extraction from the site. In phase 3, where 8 horizontal gas wells were installed, gas is now being extracted from 5 of these wells.

The average gas collection value for the last 13 weeks remains steady at approximately 2900 m³/hr. There have been only small fluctuations in extraction rates as the extraction is balanced.

Walleys Quarry Ltd is currently undertaking changes to its waste acceptance process and we require these changes to be implemented by 1 August 2022. We will continue to robustly regulate and monitor progress in the coming weeks to ensure that it remains on track to deliver the specified improvements.

The action Walleys Quarry Ltd is taking should continue to lead to lower emissions of landfill gas to ambient air and reduce the negative experience of odour in the community.

Facebook live session

If you have just joined our Facebook group, one of the best ways for you to ask a question about how we regulate Walleys Quarry is during our regular Q&A sessions.

The August session will take place at 4.30pm on Thursday 25 August 2022.

The designated Questions Thread for this session will be open between 9 am on Monday 01 August and 5pm on Friday 05 August 2022.

We will do our best to answer as many questions as possible. However, there may be some that we can't answer due to legal reasons, and some that don't fall under our regulatory remit. We may group others together to provide a single response.

We upload transcripts of the events here on Citizen Space.

Reporting odour

It is important that you continue to report odour to us. Reports from local people, along with our regulatory visits and monitoring from our mobile monitoring facilities help to create a picture which informs our enforcement and regulatory approach.

The easiest and quickest way to make a report is via GOV.UK at: <https://report-walleys-quarry-smell.service.gov.uk/>

If you do report odour to us via our incident hotline, please be courteous to our staff. They are working to deal with your reports as efficiently as possible.

Latest hydrogen sulphide levels

Our Ambient Air Monitoring Team continues to check air quality around Walleys Quarry landfill. It does this through a network of mobile monitoring stations (MMFs) that are positioned in communities around the site. These check for levels of hydrogen sulphide and methane, which are indicators of odour pollution.

The chart below contains a summary of the raw data collected from our ambient air mobile monitoring facilities (MMFs) in the period 18 July to 24 July 2022. They were slightly higher than levels seen at two locations last week, and the same at the other two.

MMF ID & Location	% of time the monitoring location recorded H ₂ S above the WHO annoyance guideline level %	Change
MMF1 Silverdale Cemetery	0.0%	— on previous week
MMF2 Silverdale PS	0.0%	— on previous week
MMF6 Fire Station	0.3%	▲ on previous week
MMF9 Galingale View	1.5%	▲ on previous week

It is important to note that this is raw data and may change slightly as results are verified.

It's important to note that there will be short-term fluctuations in the concentrations of hydrogen sulphide leaving the site. The causes can include factors such as the impact of improvement works being carried out on site and changes in the weather.

Concentrations of landfill gas emissions generally increase during colder weather and still wind conditions. With less ability for the landfill gas emissions to disperse, there is a greater potential for these emissions to cause an odour nuisance in the local community.

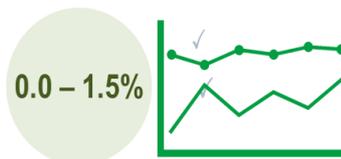
By contrast, in warmer weather the gases are naturally more diluted due to higher temperatures and rising air. This means improvements from measures implemented at Walleys Quarry Landfill to reduce odour could be less noticeable around this time of year. However, it is important to note that despite temporary increases, the overall trend in the levels of hydrogen sulphide concentrations in the ambient air continues to reduce.

Odour Reports

In the week 18 July to 24 July 2022 the Environment Agency received a total of 52 odour reports from local people. This is a decrease compared to the previous week. The peak day was Monday 18 July 2022 when we received 33 reports.



Number of odour reports/complaints to the Environment Agency 18 – 24 July 2022



Hydrogen Sulphide 30 minute average odour annoyance: % of time above WHO guideline level 18 - 24 July 2022



Hydrogen Sulphide Level. 24 hour World Health Organisation guideline to protect against short term health effects

Correspondence

Other than by means of the Facebook Group mentioned above, we are unable to answer questions through social media. If you have a question, you can [email](#) us.

Other sources of information

UK Health Security Agency public health messages and advice about the effects of odours from Walleys Quarry landfill are available online via Staffordshire County Council's website: [Frequently asked questions about the health effects of odours and emissions from Walleys Quarry: - Staffordshire County Council](#)

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