

'Unplanned flaring' during Mossmorran restart a reminder of why short and medium term solution critical says SEPA

📅 14 February 2020

'Unplanned flaring' during ExxonMobil Chemical Limited's Mossmorran restart is a reminder of why short and medium term solution are critical to addressing 'unacceptable flaring' said the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) today (Friday 14 February 2020).

- While elevated flaring is a possibility during restart it was not expected last night.
- Early indications that the near four hours of flaring was a result of a problem with one of the process units and reduced capacity of ground flares.
- SEPA understands restart likely to continue into the weekend and we will continue daily regulatory updates.
- SEPA hears clearly the level of community anxiety caused by Thursday night's flaring event.
- Regulatory, noise and air monitoring continues across local communities.
- Initial data suggests no breach of UK Air Quality Standard.
- 28 SEPA Air Quality Reports, including weekly reports, available at sepa.org.uk/mossmorran
- SEPA focused on rapid conclusion of regulatory investigation to an evidential standard.
- Thursday night flaring to be reviewed following outcome of current investigation.
- A reminder of why short and medium term solutions are so critical.
- Noise reducing flare tips to be introduced in 2020 and 2021 and planning, design then delivery of new ground flare capacity afterwards.
- SEPA's approach will address the investment required to end 'unacceptable flaring.'
- Follow @ScottishEPA and @exxonmobil_fep for updates.
- Its important we understand community impacts.
- Please report pollution via our 24 Hour Pollution Hotline at www.sepa.org.uk/report

'Unplanned flaring' during ExxonMobil Chemical Limited's Mossmorran restart is a reminder of why short and medium term solution are critical to addressing 'unacceptable flaring' said the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) today (Friday 14th February 2020).

SEPA advised that early indications suggested that the near four hours of flaring was a result of a problem with one of the process units and reduced capacity of ground flares. The agency understands the restart is likely to

continue into the weekend and SEPA advised it will continue daily regulatory updates.

The agency, which had regulatory, noise and air monitoring capabilities deployed across the incident, said it heard clearly the level of community anxiety caused by Thursday night's flaring event.

Initial data collected by the agency suggests no breach of UK Air Quality Standard. 28 SEPA Air Quality Reports, including weekly reports, available at sepa.org.uk/mossmorran

SEPA said it was focused on the rapid conclusion of its ongoing regulatory investigation to an evidential standard and that to avoid any delay, Thursday night's flaring would be reviewed following outcome of current investigation.

The agency advised that the situation was a reminder of why short and medium term solutions are so critical. The approach includes noise reducing flare tips being installed in 2020 and 2021 and planning, design then delivery of new ground flare capacity afterwards.

Chris Dailly, SEPA Senior Manager, Compliance & Beyond, said:

"Thursday's unplanned flaring during ExxonMobil Chemical's restart at Mossmorran is a real reminder of why short and medium term solutions are critical to addressing the root causes of unacceptable flaring.

"While elevated flaring is a possibility during restart it was not expected last night. Once again we heard clearly and powerfully the very real concerns and frustrations of local communities.

"We think it's important to be clear on the causes of the flaring in the final stage of this restart. We know people also want information on our monitoring. Since last year SEPA has had monitoring points around the site. Initial data suggests that whilst clearly there was elevated flaring, there was no breach of UK Air Quality Standard. We publish the data we collect on a weekly basis and now some 28 detailed reports are available.

"We accept that flaring is causing people worry, anxiety and stress. That's why our firm focus is on addressing the root-causes of 'unacceptable flaring' and making flaring an exception rather than routine, which is currently not the case. The short and medium-term investment we're requiring the operators to make, from noise reducing flare tips in 2020 and 2021 and planning, designing then delivering new ground flare capacity will make a real difference to local communities.

"We appreciate communities want action, not words which is why we're focused on rapid conclusion of regulatory investigation to an evidential standard and to the next steps in driving systemic change at Mossmorran. We'll provide more information as quickly as possible and would encourage anyone impacted to report any concerns at www.sepa.org.uk/report so these are formally reviewed and considered by specialist officers."