

Report date: 1st August 2013
Site visit dates: 8th July to 1st August

Fleet Depot – Reports of unpleasant odours

Visits by:

Richard Williams (RW) - Corporate Health & Safety

Background:

Over the past few months there have been numerous reports from the staff at the Fleet Depot of unpleasant odours that are apparently coming from the recycling plant next to the site called Plastecowood.

Some improvements have been made by Plastecowood to try and reduce the odours emitted into the air via the exhausting stack, through liaising with the Denbighshire County Council (DCC) public protection department.

Testing of the emissions have been carried out by an analyst sourced by Plastecowood and we are advised by the Public Protection team that there are no concerns from this, and no safe levels are being exceeded.

Following a meeting with the Public protection team dated 05/07/2013; it was agreed that numerous site visits would be undertaken by myself to monitor the situation with regard to the odours that have been around the Fleet depot.

- The times of attending have been varied between the hours of 7am and 5pm, to try and experience all times of the working day, and have varied in the length of time around other work commitments.
- On at least three occasions when possible, the fleet depot has been used as my place of work for longer periods, in an attempt to experience the severity of the reported odours.
- Where we have been contacted by the staff at the depot of the bad odours, we have tried to respond by visiting the site where possible.
- The initial plan was to carry this out over a two week period, however, in that time the odours were not severe in my opinion and it was decided to extend this period due to this.

Observations:

- For the first two weeks or so there were either no odours present, or a faint background odour, that I can only describe as being a hot, drying smell during various visits.
- On the 11th July, it was mentioned to me by a staff member at parking services that the odour had been very strong early that morning and all the roller shutter doors were open at the Plastecowood site at the time.
- One staff member from the fleet side has expressed their concern of the odours entering through the office window, whilst they have been open during

the hot weather. This issue was also reported to me on one occasion by the parking services, office staff members.

- On 16th July, I was based at the depot for the whole morning, and the odour was reported as being extremely strong. The workshop supervisor came and made me aware of this and ongoing outside, it had dispersed.
- On 25th July, a call was received from the depot that the odours were extremely strong. Gerry Lapington and I attended the site within 45 minutes of receiving the call. On arrival the odour was that of a different nature and could be described by ourselves as a burnt biscuit smell. It was also noted that alarms appeared to be sounding from the recycling plant next door to the depot. The individual who had reported this, advised us that the odour had reduced since our arrival and whilst it was at its worst, it had made him feel lightheaded and dizzy. The incident with the alarms sounding at the same time of the bad odour was raised with the public protection team to follow up.
- On 30th July, calls were received regarding the odours being extremely unpleasant again. Due to me being located in Bodelwyddan on this day, I was able to attend the site within 5 minutes and meet with the two members of staff who had witnessed the odour whilst working outside of the workshops. The staff member advised me that he had again felt lightheaded, dizzy and his asthma had been aggravated by the odour. I was unable to stay on site for long due to other commitments, and there was only a faint odour in the time I was present. This was then reported to the Public Protection team, requesting that a member from their team should visit the site.
- On 31st July, messages were again received from the Fleet depot staff of extremely strong odours but due to other commitments, we were unable to attend the site.
- Due to the reports of the odour being strong in the early morning time recently, on the 1st August I attended the site, just after 7am and experienced the same strong burnt biscuit odour that the staff have been reporting. Jason Ballard was also present on site at this time. Four Fleet Depot staff members were also on site, and they all expressed their concerns to us once again.

Throughout the monitoring process, I attempted to put my previous association with Plastecowood's Maintenance Engineer to our advantage. This relationship enabled more open communication between us, as we tried to establish a pattern to the complaints, but none were identified.

Conclusions:

The odour appears to be that of a transient type, and will vary with intensity from a very faint background odour to a very strong odour.

In my opinion, it appears that over the last week, there has been a change in pattern, and the odour has changed and become more severe.

It is also apparent that some staff are affected by the odours more than others, however, more staff have reported concerns this week.

The Corporate Health & Safety department has no jurisdiction over Plastecowood, and we are only able to support DCC staff in the Fleet Depot where possible. Some recommendations have been made below.

Recommended actions:

- It is recommended that Independent air monitoring at the Fleet Depot is carried out.

Priority	High	
Timescale		ASAP
Action owner		Public Protection Department

- It is recommended that Public protection continue to investigate the reports of the odours.

Priority	High	
Timescale		ASAP
Action owner		Public Protection Department

- It is recommended that Public protection communicate to Fleet depot Staff, what they are doing to remedy the situation. This should include any Air monitoring findings.

Priority	High	
Timescale		ASAP
Action owner		Public Protection Department

Richard Williams
Corporate Health and Safety

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Date: 01/08/2013

This ongoing issue is being handled by the Pollution Control Officers of planning and public protection