

Q&A's – Market Rd landfill

Q) What has occurred at the site?

A) Transpacific Industries Group is currently monitoring areas of increased temperatures (known as 'hot spots') at our closed landfill site on Market Rd in Brooklyn. The hot spots were detected during routine landfill gas management planning work conducted at the site.

With the help of external consultants, we are presently trying to categorise the situation but current data indicates that this is a deep-seated underground fire.

We have advised the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and are keeping them abreast of our activities in relation to this situation.

While the cause of the increased temperatures is not known at this stage, we are undertaking further testing on the site to determine the best course of action.

Q) When was this situation identified? How long has it been active?

A) The 'hot spots', which may be an indication of an underground fire, were detected during routine landfill gas management planning work undertaken on Thursday, 29th June 2013.

Further investigation is currently being carried out to determine the exact area of the hot spots and an appropriate course of action. It is important to note that, if present, an underground fire is very slow to progress due to the lack of available oxygen.

While this type of event is slow and does not represent immediate danger to the public, Transpacific is taking this event very seriously and has notified appropriate authorities, including the MFB and EPA, as well as obtaining the services of experts to assist in resolving the issue.

Q) What caused the hot spots at the landfill?

A) At this stage, it is unknown what has caused the increased temperatures, or 'hot spots'.

The most common cause of underground landfill fires is an increase in the oxygen content of the landfill. This, in turn, increases bacterial activity and raises temperatures (known as aerobic decomposition). If the so-called hot spots come into contact with pockets of methane gas, it can result in slow burning underground combustion.

Reference: Landfill Fires – their magnitude, characteristics and mitigation - Federal Emergency Management Agency United States Fire Administration National Fire Data Center (May 2002).

Q) How is Transpacific controlling the incident?

A) Transpacific Industries Group has alerted relevant authorities, including the MFB and the EPA, and is keeping them abreast of our activities in relation to this issue.

Further testing on the site to determine the best course of action is currently underway.

Transpacific has also sought advice and technical support from a USA-based firm that has significant expertise in this area and has retained a specialist contractor to implement the corrective actions.

Q) What does remediation of an underground fire usually involve?

A) To remediate an underground fire, areas where air is entering the landfill must be sealed off. Such areas include leachate wells and other penetrations in the landfill. Once sealed, this prevents oxygen from entering the landfill, which smothers the fire.

Transpacific is working with local authorities and a specialist contractor to ensure an appropriate course of action is taken and the identified hot spots are remediated as a matter of priority.

Q) Is there a risk to the community?

A) At this time, Transpacific does not believe the community is at risk.

As a precaution however, we are continuing to undertake extensive testing on the site to determine necessary further actions.

We have notified the MFB and EPA and will continue to keep them abreast of our activities in relation to this situation to ensure any risks are identified and mitigated.

Q) Is there a risk to workers?

A) Transpacific has engaged a specialist landfill contractor who has Occupational Health & Safety protocols and procedures in place for this type of situation. Anyone entering the site must work to their health and safety systems. Monitoring of the emissions in the workers' environment did not identify harmful emissions.

Q) Is Transpacific conducting air monitoring to identify any harmful emissions?

A) Transpacific is undertaking detailed testing on the site to determine whether any emissions may be present due to this issue. Results so far have not identified any harmful emissions.

We will continue to keep the authorities and members of the local community informed of any changes in this area.

Q) What management strategies will Transpacific put in place to ensure this incident doesn't re-occur?

A) Transpacific is currently in the process of planning for rehabilitation and aftercare of the site. We are also investigating the cause of the situation and will be implementing a company-wide corrective action to increase awareness and ensure that landfills are operated and monitored so that temperatures are kept within a normal range.