



# Flaring of petroleum from exploration or production activities



## Introduction

The Taranaki Regional Council regulates the flaring of petroleum within the Taranaki region under the Resource Management Act 1991, through the operative Regional Air Quality Plan for Taranaki [RAQP].

## Plan provisions

Rule 9 of the RAQP regulates 'Discharges to air from combustion involving flaring of petroleum recovered from natural deposits in association with the testing or enhancement of wellhead production flows' as a controlled activity that may be non-notified without written approval, provided the following standards are met. The standards are

- Flare point is a distance equal to or greater than 300 metres from any dwelling house;
- The discharge to air from flaring must not last longer than 45 days, cumulatively, per zone to be appraised;
- No non-petroleum well stream product is to be combusted
- Discharger must at all times adopt the best practicable option to prevent or minimise any adverse effects on the environment.

Rule 9 regulates flaring discharges from **exploration** activities, at a temporary exploration site.

Rule 10 of the RAQP regulates 'Discharges to air from combustion involving flaring of petroleum products incidental to the treatment of gas at a gas treatment plant' as a controlled activity that may be non-notified without written approval, provided the following standards are met. The standards are:

- Flare point is a distance equal to or greater than 300 metres from any dwellinghouse;
- Discharger must at all times adopt the best practicable option to prevent or minimise any adverse effects on the environment.

Rule 10 regulates flaring from **production** activities at a permanent production station.

If flaring cannot meet the standards of Rules 9 or 10 then it falls under Rule 11. Rule 11 would apply, for example, at a permanent wellhead facility where condensate is being recovered but gas is being flared.

Rule 11 of the RAQP regulates 'Discharges to air from combustion involving flaring of petroleum, and petroleum or petroleum products for flaring are produced in association with the production, recovery, refining, purification, or reforming of hydrocarbons including any recovery of hydrocarbons when that recovery will continue for more than 45 days per zone' as a discretionary

activity. The standard is:

- Discharger must at all times adopt the best practicable option to prevent or minimise any adverse effects on the environment.

## Consent information requirements

The key information that must accompany flaring applications includes:

- Number of wells proposed for the wellsite;
- Number of zones to be tested;
- Number of days required per zone;
- Aerial photo showing all dwellings within 300 and 1000 metres of proposed wellsite/flare pit, and any other features of interest with respect to flaring;
- Description of local land use and topography and prevailing wind direction and strength;
- Description of proposal/activity;
- Description of best practicable option and measures outlined to minimise or eliminate flaring and smoke potential;
- Assessment of environmental effects summary (This may utilise Fletcher Challenge Energy Taranaki Ltd and Council data from monitoring of Mangahewa-A and Tariki-2C);
- Consideration of relevant RAQP policies - policies 1.6, 2.2, 3.2 and 3.3; and
- Outline of consultation with interested and affected parties, including tangata whenua (Note that Council considers all landowners and occupiers within 300 metres to be affected parties and all landowners and occupiers within 1000 metres to be interested parties).

Consideration should also be given to those matters over which Council has reserved its control. That is:

- Duration of consent;
- Duration of flaring;
- Performance of any combustion equipment, including flare head configuration and air flow control;
- Location of any facilities or equipment for hydrocarbon flaring in relation to surrounding land uses;
- Performance of equipment for the separation of natural gas from liquid hydrocarbons and water;
- Giving notice to affected parties and Council prior to commencement of flaring;
- Recording of flare usage and smoke emissions;
- Oil recovery requirements;
- Setting of conditions relating to visual effects, loss of the amenity value of air, chronic or acute human health effects, soiling or damage to property, odour annoyance and offensiveness, effects on ecosystems, plants and animals, and effects on the areas identified in Policy 1.6;
- Monitoring and information.

If you require further explanation of the information in this pamphlet, please contact:

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