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Tuesday 8 May, 2018

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Little dust in Yaldhurst monitoring

Bernie Napp - Mon, 30 Apr 2018

Airborne dust monitoring at Yaldhurst quarries measured safe one-hour exposure levels during 99.6 per cent of a three-month programme beset with challenges and disagreements.



Last Friday Environment Canterbury (ECan) published its third and final report, covering the period February 22 to March 23. Exceedances of the safe one-hour exposure limit of 150 micrograms per cubic metre for particles up to 10 microns in diameter occurred at three sites.

ECan and its contractor, Paul Baynham, could not agree on the results.

"The exceedances at site 2 occurred during a north-easterly wind, and was likely related to a fire on a neighbouring property," Baynham said. "The exceedances at sites 3 and 5 coincided with winds from the quarries towards the monitoring site locations."

ECan said given the variability in wind direction immediately prior to and during the event, "it is also possible that the dust could have originated from the north or north-east of sites 3 and 5".

ECan said exceedances coincided with dust complaints received by the council's incident response service, and Baynham said of a complaint at 8am on March 16:

"While the PM10 concentration at downwind sites on Old West Road did increase slightly following the wind change, the increase was relatively modest and well below the suggested dust nuisance trigger threshold of 150 µg/m3 as a one-hour average."

Many challenges

As was the case in [the first report](#), Baynham noted nephelometers were "over-reading actual PM10 levels when compared with the reference method". Nephelometers measure light scattering from airborne dust as a proxy for PM10 levels.

Starting on December 22, the Yaldhurst Quarry Dust Monitoring Programme also experienced [instrument tampering](#), power outages leading to [incomplete capture of data](#), and other [complaints](#) to ECan that did not coincide with exceedances.

MinEx CEO Wayne Scott has previously expressed [concern](#) the programme would fail to confirm that any dust measured came from Yaldhurst quarries, because no method was in place to identify the provenance of dust.

ECan subsequently described its programme as "scientifically robust".

During the programme, a total of nine hours of exceedances were recorded, three each month, of a total of 2,208 hours measured.

February-March results

Between 22 February 2018 and 23 March 2018, the exceedances of the hourly guideline for PM10 were: site 2 (North) on March 8, 2-3pm, 183 µg/m3; site 3 (South) on March 15, 7-8am, 167 µg/m3; and site 5 (South) on March 15, 7-8am, 197 µg/m3.

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Ownership Yili Industrial Group

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