

Update on EPA regulation of Crawford's Freightlines Operations, Werris Creek

Licence update

To further protect the community from any risk of exposure to fumes, the EPA varied Crawford's Environment Protection Licence in December 2019 by limiting the number of containers that can be ventilated after fumigation in certain weather conditions. These requirements aim to ensure that ventilation occurs during conditions when, and at rates which ensure, any residual methyl bromide is effectively dispersed and any risk of it affecting surrounding residences and public places is eliminated.

Activities within ARTC Rail Siding – allowed to occur 24 hours a day, seven days a week

Currently, Crawford's is permitted to move freight containers from their operations site and over the rail line to the siding between the hours of **7am-6pm Monday to Friday** and **8am-1pm on Saturdays**.

The rail network sidings and associated infrastructure within NSW is operated by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) and is regulated by the EPA through a separate Environment Protection Licence.

Freight loading and unloading activities that occur on the rail siding immediately adjacent to the rail line are permitted to occur 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The rail siding is part of the state-wide rail network, which is not subject to limited operating hours. This means train arrivals, departures, track maintenance, as well as freight loading and unloading activities, can occur 24 hours a day, seven days a week in NSW.

Investigations Update

Dust

The EPA has investigated reports of dust and noise generation from Crawford's operations as well as within the ARTC rail siding.

Our investigations have found that Crawford's are applying water and dust suppressant to haul roads and unpaved areas at the site as far as practical. The application of water and suppressant needs to be done in a manner that ensures staff safety is maintained and the site does not become slippery or dangerous for movement of people or vehicles, while also minimising dust generation as far as practical.

In response to concerns raised about the potential for methyl bromide to bind to dust, the EPA has received advice from the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) on this issue. The APVMA is the federal agency responsible for assessing human health and environmental risks associated with the use of pesticides in Australia, which includes the use of methyl bromide for fumigation purposes.

The APVMA advised that all available information on methyl bromide indicates it has very low binding potential and is not expected to bind to dust or soil particles in the air or bind to soil, water or other surfaces.

Noise concerns

The EPA has also reviewed noise monitoring data for the Crawfords site and determined that noise levels are within the Environment Protection Licence limits.

Similarly, we are engaging with ARTC to ensure that all reasonable and feasible measures are in place within the rail corridor to ensure that noise and dust impacts associated with train loading and unloading activities are minimised to the extent practical.

Fumigation fine issued

In February 2020, the EPA issued a \$15,000 fine to Crawfords following our investigation of reports that fumigation was occurring outside the hours specified in their Environment Protection Licence.

We also reviewed records associated with these fumigation activities and determined that concentrations of methyl bromide were within the Environment Protection Licence limits.

Dangerous Goods

In recent months, the EPA has received reports of alleged dangerous goods being received and stored at the Crawfords site.

Our investigations have revealed that the material in question is a fertiliser, calcium ammonium nitrate. It is not considered a hazardous product or dangerous good.

Current Development Application under consideration

Liverpool Plains Shire Council is currently considering a development application to extend Crawfords' operating hours by allowing deliveries of grain and containerised freight to the site at night. Fumigation activities will continue to occur only during daytime hours.

If approved, this will mean that movement of freight containers from the Crawfords operations site to the rail siding may occur between 1pm to 6pm on Saturdays, and between 8am to 4pm on Sundays and public holidays.

Liverpool Plains Shire Council is the authority responsible for processing the development application and enforcing the conditions of consent. All questions or concerns relating to the development application for the extension of operating hours or the development consent should be directed to the Council. The EPA is not responsible for determining development applications.

NSW EPA – who to contact

If you have any concerns, questions or need further information about the Environment Protection Licence for either Crawfords or ARTC, you can contact the EPA's Environment Line on 131 555 or send an email to info@epa.nsw.gov.au. You can report any concerns, observations or environmental incidents to the EPA's Environment Line 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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