

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
FIELD SERVICES AND COMPLIANCE BUREAU
FIELD OFFICE #2 - MASON CITY IOWA**

DATE: April 8, 2024

TO: The Record

FROM: David Knoll

SUBJECT: Alter Metal Open Burning Complaint (ID# 33278)
12050 W State Street, Mason City, IA, Cerro Gordo County

On the morning of April 5, 2024, this office received an anonymous complaint stating Alter Metal Recycling - Mason City appeared to be burning on the west end of their property. The complainant noted smoke, flames, and foil particulates were occurring at the time of the call.

Dan Bratrud, DNR FO2, and I investigated the complaint approximately one-half hour after receiving it. We drove around the east and south perimeter of the site before entering the facility. No smoke, foil particulates, or other evidence of an ongoing fire were observed. Upon entering the facility, we met with Jeff Riser, facility manager. Jeff explained a fire had occurred a short time ago that morning due to torch cutting activities and was immediately extinguished. Jeff further explained he had shutdown the torch cutting by their third-party contractor (Midwest Torching) upon discovery. He then led us to the torch cutting location.

We observed that no torching was currently taking place. Jeff pointed out a large tote of water nearby that had been used to extinguish the fire. He also explained that the material being cut were metal shafts from windmills. It was discovered upon torching that the shafts contained a chrome alloy which resulted in the smoke and the fire. Jeff stated he instructed the torch cutters to discontinue the cutting of this material and not resume it.

Jeff then offered to briefly demonstrate the activity so we could observe what had occurred, as long as he wouldn't be cited for it. We agreed and the workers remobilized the equipment and began torching. A substantial amount of yellow/orange smoke occurred and the torching was stopped before a fire had a chance to occur. The smoke appeared to dissipate relatively quickly prior to leaving the property, but the demonstration was brief.

I advised Jeff that due to the quick action to extinguish the fire and discontinue further activity, it would not be considered a violation. No further action is required at this time.

DK



Photo 1: Demonstration of torching at cutting area. Water tote visible in left of picture and fire area visible on right. Substantial smoke was generated. (4/05/2024)