

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

DATE: July 28, 2020

TO: The Record

FROM: Jeremy Klatt *JK*

SUBJECT: **Alter Metal Recycling Open Burning Complaint  
12050 West State, Mason City; Cerro Gordo County**

On July 21, 2020, this office received a complaint that there was open burning producing a black smoke plume from the Alter Metal facility in Mason City. I drove to the facility on the same day; from the facility perimeter I could see an individual cutting a large metal object with a flaming cutting torch that was producing some smoke.

I then met with the facility manager, Chris Clemons, Mr. Clemons explained that Alter has been cutting up large pieces of metal from dismantled windmills. Using cameras on the facility grounds, he could show me what was occurring and took a screen shot of the camera footage and emailed the picture to me (see attached). There were three or four individuals in the area, each working on a separate windmill part.

I explained that someone driving by this morning had noted smoke and some flames from the facility. Mr. Clemons indicated that the parts being cut up are the windmill part where the blades fasten to the tower and that there is a grease pan on the part that catches any grease. He indicated that there was some grease in a grease pan that caught fire while the part was being cut up earlier in the morning and that the fire was extinguished by Alter staff. It is possible, that the complainant observed this fire at the facility.

Mr. Clemons indicated that they would likely be cutting these windmill pieces for a few weeks.

I spoke with David Miller, DNR, about the matter. Mr. Miller indicated that he had also noted smoke from the Alter property the previous day (July 20) while passing through the area. He also noted that the smoke was being generated from the cutting of windmill parts. As a certified opacity reader, Mr. Miller took an opacity reading of the smoke and noted an opacity of 20%.

No violations were noted during the inspection. No further action is required.