

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

DATE: July 22, 2020
TO: The Record
FROM: Kayla Beck
SUBJECT: Lehigh Cement Company- Mason City, Iowa
Complaint #28350

On June 03, 2020, this office received an anonymous complaint that dust was not being controlled in the load out bays at Lehigh Cement Company. The complaint claimed that the dust was heavy enough that you were unable to see semi-trucks behind you. Complainant said that the 30 and 40 loadout bays are the worst. The complaint received by this office was anonymous. The same complaint was left as a voicemail with Cerro Gordo Public Health. In that message the complainant left his name and phone number. Cerro Gordo Public Health forwarded the complaint and voicemail along to us for investigation. I was assigned the complaint and investigated it the same day.

At 2:30 PM I entered the administration building and signed in. An employee walking by asked who I was there to see and I explained the nature of my visit. She said she would contact Perry Dargitz, Environmental Manager, to let him know I was there. Once Perry arrived I described the complaint to him. He said that no issues had been reported to him that day and as far as he knew things were running as they should be.

We left the administration building and drove to the load out area. I did not notice any dust leaving the bays during our approach. There are four loading bays; bays 20, 30 and 40 are for truck operations. While bay 50 is for rail load out. On the day of the investigation there were no rail car being loaded. We stood between bay 30 and 40 to watch trucks as they were loaded. Only one truck can be loaded at a time. A telescoping chute extends into the truck and deposits material. I watched multiple trucks in both bays and saw no impactful emissions. As the truck is nearing capacity small puffs of particulate matter escape the hatch. Once loaded the trucks pull forward and the driver exits the cab. They climb up to secure the hatch and blow off any loose material that is on top of the truck. This can cause clouding of particulate matter but likely wouldn't rise to a level of environmental concern. I walked along the interior and exterior of the bays and did not observe any piles of material. There was some cement dust but no more than you would expect.

Perry and I went up to the control booth where two operators are in charge of loading the trucks. I asked the operators if they had seen any excessive pluming and they said no. They had not had any over fills or spills. They also mentioned that if a door in the silo gets stuck open, causing unregulated release of material, they have a button to close an emergency door to stop any excess material from entering the bay. If they notice any problems with the dust collection system they inform their supervisor. The supervisor then contacts maintenance to send out the 'dust collector guys'.

Perry and I traveled to the maintenance building so I could review records for the control equipment. The bags for bay 30 had been replaced in November 2019 and the bags in bay 40 in July 2019. Both control units were inspected in January 2020 and were not found to need any repairs.

Based on my observations and record review I was unable to confirm the claims of this complaint. The complainant's claims were very different from my observations so I decided to reach out to him using the information he provided CGPH. On June 4, 2020, I called the complainant and he was surprised to hear I had a different experience than the one he described. I advised him we were out on site within an hour of him lodging the complaint. I assured him we take these matters seriously and asked if he saw the conditions he described again to try and document that with photos or videos. He said he would. Six weeks passed with no further contact from the complainant. With no additional information or proof of violation I decided to close the complaint. This office received a similar complaint in 2016. That investigation was handled by David Knoll. His findings were similar to mine. At this time no further action is required.

KB



All photos were taken by Kayla Beck of FO #2 on June 03, 2020. This photo was taken of a truck being actively loaded. No visible dust can be seen escaping.



This photo was taken in the 30-bay mentioned in the complaint. It illustrated the visibility conditions from entrance to exit at the time of my investigation.

