

WHAT IS A FLARE

Industrial flares are devices that are designed to burn waste gas in a safe, controlled manner. The majority of industrial flares in Louisiana combust waste gas using a specially designed burner tip that produces a flame in the open air. Flares are used in a wide variety of industrial operations, including petroleum refining and chemical processing.

The two major types of flares are the steam-assisted flare and the air-assisted flare, in which steam or air is injected at the flare tip. DEQ authorizes flares to burn waste gas resulting from certain routine operations as well as some non-routine situations, such as power loss to the site or equipment failure.

Flares are necessary for safety purposes. Flares protect industrial sites and the adjacent communities by safely burning waste gas. Flares can be used during non-routine situations such as power outages, emergency conditions or planned maintenance activities to safely burn and destroy large volumes of waste gas in a controlled manner. During these situations, flares may operate occasionally and may have extremely large, visible flames.

Flares are also necessary for pollution reduction, as flaring helps reduce the amount of pollution released into the environment during normal plant operations. This is done by burning and destroying waste gas instead of allowing it to vent directly to the atmosphere. During these situations, flares typically operate continuously, process smaller volumes of waste gas and have smaller visible flames.



HOTLINES FOR EMERGENCIES DIAL 911

DEQ encourages citizens, business owners and the regulated community to report environmental concerns they have knowledge of, through DEQ's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) line at (225) 219-3640 or toll free, 1-888-763-5424.

For immediate environmental emergencies, please first contact your local authorities - police, sheriff, fire department, etc.

To leave an environmental notification outside of business hours, leave a message by calling (225) 342-1234 or the toll free number. The message will usually be reviewed the next business day.

Citizens may also submit a report or complaint online by filling out a form at: <http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/apps/forms/irf/forms/>

For general department information, contact DEQ's Customer Service Center at (225) 219-LDEQ (5337) or Toll Free 1-866-896-LDEQ (5337).



WHEN DEQ RESPONDS



DEQ's INVESTIGATORY RESPONSIBILITY

DEQ is authorized by the Environmental Quality Act to provide immediate response to any environmental problem or emergency incident which threatens human health or the environment. The Emergency Response Section, under the Office of Environmental Compliance, is tasked to meet this obligation.

DEQ's regional offices throughout the state cover all 64 parishes and have the capability to deploy resources and personnel to assist DEQ's Emergency Response team, given the nature of an event. When a significant emissions incident, accident or emergency occurs, DEQ can deploy an emergency response team with air monitoring resources in order to collect data on the current state of the air surrounding the event. The response team can deploy quickly to any environmental threat or incident, 24 hours/7 days a week. This response protocol has resulted in an enhanced overall capability of DEQ's mission to protect the citizens of this state and the environment in which we live.

Air monitoring will typically consist of the use of handheld monitoring devices, Summa canisters (which collect air for subsequent laboratory analysis) and possible deployment of the Mobile Air Monitoring Laboratory (a specially outfitted Winnebago which is equipped with air monitoring capabilities)



MSA handheld air monitoring device



Summa Air Canister



Porta Sens II handheld air monitoring device

DEQ emergency responders maintain a close working relationship with the Louisiana State Police Transportation and Environmental Safety Section (TESS) in dealing with hazardous material incident responses. DEQ responders also investigate environmental complaints.

By law, the Incident Commander at all hazardous materials events is the Louisiana State Police. Local or parish officials, working in conjunction with the other response organizations, will be responsible for any residential, school, church or commercial evacuations as they relate to a public safety standpoint. All agencies responding to an incident work together in a Unified Command structure to address the various issues that arise during these occasions.

DEQ works in conjunction with law enforcement to ensure that human health and the environment are protected and that no harm ensues. Upon conclusion of the investigation, if collected air samples will be sent to a laboratory for analysis and a report will be prepared and placed into the Electronic Document Monitoring System (EDMS) on the DEQ Web site under the Agency Interest (AI) number specific to that incident.

DEQ is tasked with investigating all reported unauthorized air discharges from facilities in the State. If the unauthorized discharge is believed to be in excess of a Reportable Quantity (RQ), the facility must make notification to the DPS Hazardous Materials Hotline.

If the unauthorized discharge causes an "emergency" condition, the facility has 1 hour to notify the Department of Public Safety (DPS) Hazardous Materials Hotline. Emergency conditions are defined as any condition which could reasonably be expected to endanger the health and safety of the public, cause significant adverse impact to the land, water or air environment, or cause severe damage to property. If the unauthorized discharge causes a "non-emergency" condition and is in excess of an RQ, that facility has 24 hours from the incident occurrence to notify the DPS Hazardous Materials Hotline.

A facility that reports an unauthorized discharge has 7 calendar days to internally investigate the release and provide DEQ with a final written report that includes the known or believed cause of the release, how much material was released, whether the release was preventable, and what measures will be put into place to prevent a reoccurrence of the release. If the facility cannot complete their internal investigation in 7 days they can request a 60-day extension. In either case, the DEQ investigation into the release cannot be completed until receipt of the facility's final report.

Failure to abide by these regulations may result in an enforcement action by DEQ, such as a fine or other penalties.