

# DEQ issues notice of violation to Sinclair

## *Document alleges September's 'strong' odors exceeded limits*

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The Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality has issued a notice of violation to Sinclair Wyoming Refining Company for releasing odors in September.

The notice comes about five months after a Sinclair Town Council meeting where residents sought an explanation for increasingly pungent smells coming from the facility.

"My concern about the odors was that they were different and they were very overwhelming," Sinclair resident Lori Olson said.

Glenn Spangler, DEQ District 1 air quality engineer, monitored odors in and near the refinery on Sept. 16 and 17 in response to an odor complaint lodged against the facility, the notice read. He detected "strong onion/crude oil odors" at levels higher than permitted by Wyoming Air Quality Standards and Regulations, according to the document.

A crude oil tank used to store slop — or oils that don't meet specifications — was one smell-causing source, John Pfeffer, refinery environmental health and safety manager, said previously.

Materials in the tank "had an odor" and were "hotter than we would like to have them," he said, adding that tank seals designed to control emissions were damaged.

"We corrected the product flow — the hot material and the product stream ... immediately, and then it took us some time to get the tank seals repaired," he added.

Cleaning up soils contaminated by tar-like material and spent sulfuric acid also stirred up smells. Storing these substances north of the refinery is no longer an accepted practice, and refinery officials are required to remediate the soil, Pfeffer said.

They put "a very thorough odor monitoring protocol" into place and are using an odor-suppressing foam to contain the smell, he said.

A suit could be filed against the company to "recover appropriate penalties," which include a fine of up to \$10,000 per violation per day, a temporary or permanent injunction, or both, according to the notice dated Jan. 4.

However: "On this incident for Sinclair, we're hoping to reach some type of settlement," said Keith Guille, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality public information officer. He added: "Obviously, we don't have that amount yet until we finish with our settlement agreement talks."

If an agreement can't be reached between the Department and Sinclair, a court would take the case and determine if a penalty should be assessed, Guille said.

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