

Communiqué

1. The National Environmental Laboratory of this Ministry has been carrying out daily ambient air monitoring exercises as from 6 November 2024 to assess the prevailing ambient air quality at several regions located downwind of the plume of smoke emanating from the fire outbreak at Mare Chicose landfill site that occurred on the same day.
2. Monitoring has been conducted at Union Park, Cluny, Deux Bras and Rose-Belle. Due to changing wind direction on certain days causing the smoke plume to disperse further away from the above-mentioned regions, other residential areas such as Nouvelle France, La Flora and Cité Atlee at Forest Side are being also monitored.
3. In view that a fire outbreak at landfill site generally produces smoke, odour and particulate matter and that the smoke produced is a mixture of several gases which can be dangerous to human health at certain concentration, gaseous parameters like Nitrogen Dioxide, Nitrogen Monoxide, Carbon Monoxide, Chlorobenzene, Ethylbenzene, Sulphur Dioxide, Ammonia, Formaldehyde and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) including Benzene, Toluene, Meta-Xylene, Ortho-Xylene, Para-Xylene and Poly-Aromatic Hydrocarbon (PAHs) (such as Naphthalene) are being monitored using a Portable Gaseous Analyser on a daily basis, to determine the pollutants present in ambient air.
4. The results obtained from the measurements done from 06 to 15 November 2024 were compliant with the Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level (LOAEL) values for each of the above-mentioned parameters. According to the United States Environment Protection Agency (US EPA), the LOAEL is the lowest tested dose of a substance that has been reported to cause adverse health effects on people and animals.
5. Odour associated with burning of waste was discernible at several downwind regions, including Union Park on 6, 7, 9, 12, 13 November 2024; Cité Atlee, Forest side on 7 and 12 November 2024, Cluny on 6 and 7 November 2024, Deux Bras on 7 November 2024, Rose-Belle on 7, 8, 9 and 10 November 2024, 16ème Mille, Forest Side on 7 and 12 November 2024, Cité Atlee, Forest Side on 7, 12 November 2024, Nouvelle France on 6,7,9,10, 12 and 13 November 2024 and La Flora on 9 and 11 November 2024.
6. A mobile monitoring station for the continuous measurement of ambient air quality has been deployed at the Nouvelle France Community Health Centre.
7. Taking into consideration the prevailing onsite conditions at Mare Chicose landfill site and that the Mauritius Fire Rescue Services (MRFS) is still carrying out its firefighting activities, it is advisable that vulnerable groups such as the children, the elderly or people with pre-existing respiratory conditions consider reducing outdoor physical activities.
8. Air monitoring exercises are being maintained and reports are accessible on the website of this Ministry at the following link: <https://environment.govmu.org/Pages/Air-Quality-Reports-at-Mare-Chicose.aspx>

*Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change
(Environment and Climate Change Division)
15 November 2024*