

Fact Sheet

UPDATED: April 2021

Odour and our Sunshine North facility

We are working to address the community's concerns.

What can I smell?

Odour emissions can be a by-product of resin manufacture, an activity undertaken at the AkzoNobel Sunshine facility. In response to the EPA informing us of community concerns about odour, AkzoNobel undertook odour assessments in late 2019 and early 2020. This enabled us to pinpoint the odour source and establish that the cause of odour is plant equipment operating ineffectively.

AkzoNobel's plans to improve odour emissions

AkzoNobel has an EPA license that limits its emissions, including odour. We are working closely with the EPA to monitor Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) emissions and associated odour.

AkzoNobel wants to be a good neighbor and manage our emissions in line with licensing requirements. We also want to gain community confidence that our operations will not adversely impact community members. For this reason, we are looking to resolve the issues with sustainable, long-term solutions, and are exploring measures that may have an impact in the shorter term.

Currently VOCs are collected via an extraction system and sent to a Wet Chemical Scrubber. The scrubber's purpose is to remove or filter VOCs before expelling into the atmosphere. This scrubber is not operating to remove all of the VOCs.

The EPA has approved our plans to replace the current equipment (the scrubber) with a "Regenerative Thermal Oxidiser" to help reduce odorous emissions and meet the surrounding community's expectations.

Regenerative Thermal Oxidiser

A Regenerative Thermal Oxidiser (RTO) is an air treatment system that is widely regarded as best practice in odour mitigation. It will more effectively and efficiently control odour from AkzoNobel's resin manufacturing activity. The RTO is a new technology that heats the VOCs and burns them at high temperatures. No chemicals are used in this process. The RTO will have much greater odour removal efficiency, ensuring a reduction in emissions of VOCs and odorous compounds. The existing wet chemical scrubber will be decommissioned once the new equipment is installed.

Interim measures

In May, as an interim measure before the RTO is installed, we will be introducing a new carbon filter that will remove more of the VOCs and associated odour. Whilst it is not likely to be as effective as the RTO, it will reduce the likelihood of VOCs exiting the plant and impacting the community.

Monitoring

In addition to installing new equipment, AkzoNobel is also undertaking rigorous odour monitoring, in accordance with a monitoring plan approved by the EPA.

The first stage of monitoring took place in February 2021. Monitoring at the AkzoNobel property boundary assessed the quantity of VOCs being emitted from the site. Results indicated that emissions were within public health and safety limits, and potential risk to human health was low based on VOC concentrations detected.

Further monitoring will be conducted towards late May/early June after the carbon filter is installed, so the impacts can be assessed.

New monitoring protocols will also be established when the RTO is commissioned and will be ongoing to check it is working as expected. All monitoring results will be shared with the local community in line with EPA reporting requirements. The RTO will be installed by October 2021. AkzoNobel will continue to monitor and address emissions, and work with the local community.

Can these odorous emissions impact human health?

Certain VOCs can be harmful when they are present above air-quality standards, which are intended to be protective of human health. However, the air monitoring results from February indicated that emissions were within public health and safety limits, and potential risk to human health was low based on VOC concentrations detected.

Why will it take so long to install the RTO?

The new equipment is highly specialised, designed and built for purpose using components that are manufactured overseas, and civil and construction works will be necessary to accommodate the new equipment. We also need to temporarily relocate the current equipment so that the construction can occur. Unfortunately, this all takes time, but AkzoNobel is working hard to make it happen as soon as possible.

Who can I talk to if I have questions or concerns?

Community members are invited to contact AkzoNobel's hotline on 03 93134555. To help us investigate odour reports, information such as time of odour, a general location relative to the site and wind direction is very helpful. The caller's contact details will be needed if a response is requested.

EPA Victoria's 24-hour hotline is 1300 372 842.

Individuals who are unwell are reminded to please contact a health professional.