

Fire Outbreak at the Mare Chicose Landfill

A major fire incident occurred on 22 November 2022 at 16.00 hours more precisely in Cell 6 Extension area at Mare Chicose Landfill. The Fire & Rescue Services (FRS) was immediately requested by the contractor to attend the incident.

The Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service has mobilized resources including manpower, lorries, water tankers and equipment on the site from the Fire Stations of Rose Belle, Mahebourg and St Aubin.

A considerable amount of water is being poured from water tankers onto the perimeter of the burning area to create a water curtain that will prevent the fire from spreading to the surrounding area. This operation is being carried out round the clock with the available number of manpower, water pumps and water tankers.

An on-site meeting was held on Wednesday 23 November 2022, at around 09.30 hours, with representatives of the Mauritius Fire Rescue Services (MFRS), National Disaster Risk Reduction & Management Centre, Police de l'Environnement, contractor for the landfill, namely JV Sotravic/Eneotech, Solid Waste Management Division, Department of Environment, Waste & Energy Consultant, and SMF and appropriate measures have been implemented on site.

The Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) is continuing watering to prevent the propagation of fire and Sotravic has been placing soil on wastes to prevent oxygen from reaching lower levels in the landfill; about 11 lorries have been mobilised to carry soil to the landfill site.

Sotravic has also mobilized water bowsers to provide water to MFRS; and Assistance of Riche-en-Eau Sugar Estate and Airports of Mauritius has been obtained in terms of provision of water and equipment for firefighting.

Moreover, both quantitative and qualitative air monitoring and monitoring of adjacent water courses are being undertaken in the surrounding region. As at now, no signs of leachate overflow have been noted.

The National Environmental Laboratory (NEL) carried out 2 air monitoring exercises at Mare Chicose Landfill Site, Deux Bras, New Grove, Rose Belle and Union Park.

A water sampling exercise was also conducted to assess the impacts on surface water quality in the area. Sites monitored include River Tranquille, upstream and downstream of Mare Chicose Landfill site, River La Chaux (Astroea Bridge downstream of Mare Chicose and Shivala Road, Rose Belle) and Rivière des Creoles, St Hubert.

For air monitoring, no toxic concentrations were noted and similarly, for water quality, no apparent pollution was noted. All water samples collected were clear. However, tests are being carried out for further assessment of any pollution.

On the basis of information available now and the assessment of the present situation, it is reckoned that the fire and smoke will take some time to subside being given the huge amount of waste deposited.

The personnel of the MFRS are still combatting the fire. The situation is being monitored closely and progress on the matter will be reported accordingly.

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Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change

(Solid Waste Management Division)