



Bullseye Glass Company Opacity Violation and Warning Letter

Questions and answers

May 5, 2016

What happened?

On April 28th and 29th 2016, DEQ inspectors noticed visible particulate emissions coming from an uncontrolled furnace at Bullseye Glass Company. The inspectors, certified to measure opacity, took formal observations and found that the smoke from some of the furnaces was above DEQ's visible emissions standard. They documented this violation and DEQ has sent Bullseye Glass Company a warning letter explaining the violation and the next steps the facility must take to reduce particulate emissions. DEQ inspectors also measured opacity from the baghouse exhaust and found no visible emissions.

Does this mean they are emitting too much?

It means the emissions are too thick which can indicate that the facility is emitting too much overall particulate matter. Measuring opacity doesn't actually measure a quantity of emissions so it can't be tied directly to concentrations in ambient air.

What does this mean for my health?

Opacity cannot be used to assess health impacts. DEQ's ambient monitoring in the area around Bullseye Glass Company is taking direct samples from the air around the facility which can be used to assess impacts to public health. DEQ and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) continue to provide monitoring information weekly.

What are the next steps?

DEQ has, consistent with enforcement practices, issued Bullseye Glass Company a warning letter which requires Bullseye Glass Company to submit an action plan to reduce particulate emissions back to within acceptable levels. Bullseye Glass Company must submit this plan to DEQ by June 5th, 2016. The plan must include milestones to make sure it comes into compliance with the visible emissions standards. DEQ will perform additional opacity measurements to make sure sufficient progress is being made.

What is opacity?

Opacity is a measure of how thick smoke is. More specifically, the measurement is of how much light is blocked by emissions from the stack. It's measured, regulated and reported as a percent of light that is blocked. An air quality standard of 20 percent opacity means 20 percent of the visible light is blocked from coming through the smoke. It does not include water vapor, which is an important point since many industrial smokestack plumes include water vapor that is not a pollutant. Most plumes that people see are primarily water vapor.

Under Oregon law, opacity "means the degree to which emissions, excluding uncombined water, reduce the transmission of light and obscure the view of an object in the background as measured by EPA Method 9 or other method."

How is opacity measured?

Opacity is measured using an established EPA method and must be performed by inspectors who have received training and certification. Inspectors must be recertified frequently and attend "smoke school" where they must pass opacity observation tests in order to retain certification.