

Response: OIA2020.40

3 August 2020

To Brent Yardley

Via FYI.org _fyi-request-13239-7e07e1a8@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Brent

Official information request

I refer to your official information request 8 July 2020, and copied below -

There have been two significant gas leaks at the Picton port within two years...

...Can you please make available any information documenting investigation and/or review of both these incidents.

I can confirm that KiwiRail has completed an internal investigation into these incidents – however the investigation report is withheld under section 9 (2)(h) – legal privilege as there is an ongoing WorkSafe investigation into the incidents and KiwiRail’s report has been prepared under privilege.

However, we can provide some general comments as to KiwiRail’s response to these incidents and the end-to-end review of our LPG operation.

KiwiRail has completed the investigation into the LPG leaks, working alongside relevant stakeholders.

KiwiRail is actioning the recommendations of the review and have already implemented the majority of the actions identified. These include reviewing our dangerous goods processes, escalation response and purchasing additional gas detections units specifically calibrated for LPG.

Following the review, we have taken all team members and contractors across the country, who handle the ISO LPG Tank wagons, through LPG Awareness and Incident activation/response training to ensure we are following best practice in all situations.

We have reiterated to our workers that they are supported to err on the side of caution and call an emergency even if a minor leak only is suspected.

As part of our post review activities we have worked closely with all parties, such as Port of Marlborough, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, local Councils etc in order to learn from the events and further improve our joint preparedness planning and response.

As noted previously we have also purchased Active Gas Detection units specifically configured for LPG. These are very sensitive detection units specifically calibrated for LPG.

Units have been installed at our Wellington and Picton terminals, as well as carried on the Interislander. Team members undertaking inspections of these wagons have undergone training in their use. These will be invaluable in the event of another leak, as in the 2020

incident, the small volume of gas meant our automatic detection units were not picking up a leak, but our workers could faintly smell LPG when undertaking inspections.

For context, LPG in its natural state is odourless, so a specific odour is added to ensure people can smell leaks. This odour is specifically targeted to the human smell sense and thus can be detected at a much lower level than equipment usually detects

So, while physical hourly checks were undertaken as standard, part of the required monitoring of LPG ISO Tank wagons, it was difficult to pinpoint the location of the leak as it was very small and behind an enclosed cabinet. The purchase of these units will assist KiwiRail in pinpointing any potential future leaks.

We trust this answers your query; however, any further questions please get in touch.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling free-phone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave Allard', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dave Allard
Government Relations Advisor, KiwiRail