

10/18/22

Odor complaint – Childs Park

Via the handheld radio, Program Manager Chris Brodeur asked me to check an odor complaint at 9th Ave S and 42nd St. On the way there, I drove East up 8th Ave S with the windows down and the AC turned off. I did not detect any type of odor driving on 8th Ave S. I arrived at the intersection at 9th Ave S and 42nd St around 11:45am. The weather was cloudy with very light drizzle, the wind was coming from the North-Northwest. Facing South at the intersection, I sat for roughly 10 minutes and detected no odor. I spoke with Chris via the handheld radio again to give him an update on my findings. At that point Chris asked me to check out another intersection at 9th Ave and 43rd St. S. I drove West towards the intersection. Once there, I immediately detected a strong natural gas type of odor. Still facing West, I sat at the intersection for a few minutes and observed my surroundings. Across the street was an industrial facility with multiple black storage tanks and a few blue storage tanks, this facility was later identified as Howco Environmental Services. On top of one of the blue storage tanks was a windsock that was erected; this windsock was blowing straight to my location. I left the intersection and drove across the street to the plant. When I pulled into the parking lot, I could still smell the odor. I knocked on the office door and walked in, but no one was there. I walked over to the entrance of the wooden privacy fence that separated the parking lot from the tank area and stuck my head through looking for anyone close by. I instantly got hit with a very potent dose of the same odor I encountered across the street at 9th and 43rd. A few minutes later I noticed a gentleman walking along the tanks, so I waved him over. He introduced himself as Tim.

Not having any background on the facility, I asked Tim if he could explain the process currently going on. He stated that they were just moving water. After I explained to him that they were causing odors that I could smell on-site and across the street, he said he was going to turn off the air stripper. This only took a few minutes and once Tim came back, I asked if he was the plant manager and he stated no, Prima was the site manager, but she was on lunch until 1:00pm. I told Tim I would come back after lunch to speak with Prima. When leaving the area, I noticed the odor had subsided and was not nearly as strong as when I first pulled up. I returned to the intersection at 9th Ave and 43rd St. S where I first noticed the strong odor around 1:55pm. Once again facing West with the windows down and AC off, I only noticed a very faint natural gas type of odor that would come and go. I went onsite and meet with Prima and Leo. They explained the facility was used to clean (recycle) diesel fuel with water (steam) and air. Leo went on to explain that they have been working with consultants to help with "cleaning" the process up to help with odor issues. At this time, I asked if the air strippers were on or off and they said "off". I asked if they could turn them back on so we could see if there was a difference in odor detection. They agreed. Prima turned the air strippers on while Leo and I stayed back, and he pointed out the black exhaust tube that was temporarily in place until they could get an onsite water tank to push the exhaust into. This exhaust tube ran from the top of one of the strippers to the top of a black tank raising the exhaust discharge point approximately 20 feet. At this point I asked Leo if he would walk across the street to the intersection with me to see if we could smell anything coming from the air strippers. After a few minutes we both agreed that we could smell a strong, come and go odor that we both assumed was coming from the air stripper exhaust, as it was the same odor as detected on-site. Again, Leo stated they are in the middle of working on getting some changes done to the plant to help with odor. Before leaving, I gave Leo my card and asked him to put everything he had told me about the consultant in writing. As of this date, I have not received this written statement.