

Flaring

ExxonMobil Australia is focused on reducing flaring and minimising the impact from the flare for our neighbours.



Flaring is an important and necessary safety mechanism at ExxonMobil facilities. However, we understand the sight of a flame burning at the top of the flare stack might be cause for concern for our neighbours and community, especially when the flame is larger, smokier or noisier than normal.

Our operations

What does the flare do?

The flare basically functions as a safety relief valve. Flares are used in this way by petroleum refineries, chemical plants and gas processing facilities everywhere around the world.

Whenever there is an upset or interruption to the usual operation of our facilities, any excess product that is generated is able to be sent to the flare and safely ignited via a pilot light. The quantity of material flared during a major interruption, such as a power failure, can be quite considerable.

Burning the excess product in this way ensures it does not escape into the atmosphere and create a possible safety and environmental hazard.

Does the flare create a noise?

We continue to make improvements to the way our flares work in order to reduce noise and operate more effectively. Some flares, such as the one at Altona Refinery, use steam to reduce smoke. This can create some noise which may be heard by our neighbours.

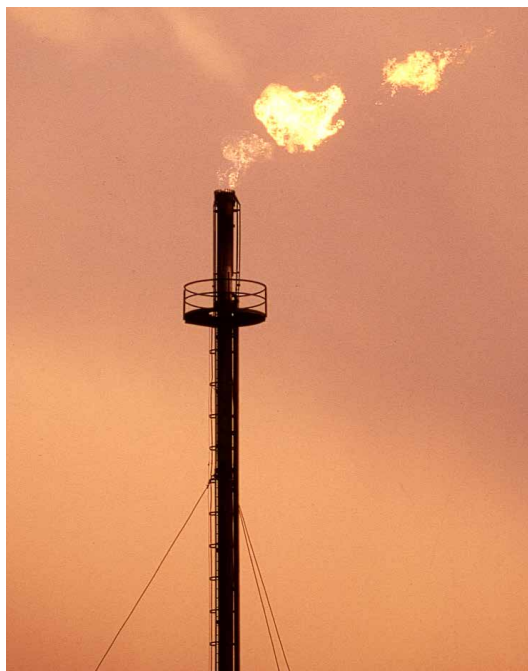
Why does the flare flame vary in size?

Flares are kept alight continuously, similar to the pilot light in a gas heater or hot water system at home, thus there is usually a small flame visible at the top. Changes in the size of the flame are due to changes in the amount of excess product which is being sent to the flare as a result of either planned or unplanned interruptions to the normal process. Our objective is to keep that amount of product as small as possible at all times.

Safety is our priority

Is the flare dangerous?

No. Flares are used by refineries, chemical plants and gas processing facilities around the world as an appropriate and safe way to deal with excess product generated. We place the highest priority on operating flawlessly in all aspects of our business.



Environmental management

Why does black smoke come from the flare?

Black smoke from the flare can occur when burning large amounts of excess gas and especially if the flared material contains heavier hydrocarbons. A monitoring system is in place to automatically adjust the steam flowing to the flare, but if there is a sudden, significant increase in flared gas it can take a little while for the steam rate to catch up, leading to increased black smoke for a limited period of time.

Does the flare pollute the environment?

Flares are operated and managed in accordance with the EPA licence for the specific site. Use of the flare minimises any impact on the environment by safely burning excess gases.

For more information on our local operations and for contact numbers for your closest ExxonMobil Australia site, visit www.exxonmobil.com.au.