

Hydro Tasmania

Safety Alert

Clarence Pipeline PAHs Exposure

Alert Number (YYMMDD)	250626	Date Issued	26 June 2025
SAP Incident Number	65302	Approved By	Head of WHS
Alert Category	Safety	Action Required?	Yes

Alert details/incident summary

During leak repairs on the Clarence pipeline, several workers developed red, irritated skin, initially thought to be sunburn. However, overcast conditions raised concerns of the potential for chemical exposure from historic use of chemicals on the pipeline. Redness and skin irritation cleared in a couple of days with no further issues.

Alert/incident photos



Immediate action taken

- Incident reported to supervisor.
- Occupational Hygienist (IPM) engaged to test for Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs).
- Mini-ICAM investigation initiated.

Findings and Actions

IPM testing confirmed elevated PAHs, particularly Benzo(a)pyrene, in pipeline timber and lining, with residual creosote still present despite being phased out 25–30 years ago. Nine pipelines statewide are creosote-coated, and about half of the conveyance infrastructure uses similar lining. Soil sampling was also conducted for Benzo[a]pyrene. Low risk results were confirmed, below the health investigation levels (HIL) and below ecological investigation levels (EIL) for commercial and industrial land. IPM report also noted that elevated levels of Benzo[a]pyrene in relatively immobile sources, such as bitumen fragments, do not represent a significant health risk

- Work instructions updated to include chemical hazard controls, PPE, and sanitation procedures.
- PPE: waterproof coveralls, double gloves, taped gumboots, face shield, and barrier creams.
- Additional site supplies: fresh water, wipes, plastic bags, and sanitiser.
- Tools must be cleaned post-use; disposable PPE to be safely removed and sealed for disposal.
- Hazard register to be updated to reflect PAH presence.
- PPE and hygiene requirements to be communicated to contractors working on affected pipelines