



## Inspection Report

Tracking ID: PC1910-033

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**Source:** Freeport McMoRan Sierrita Incorporated  
**Location:** 6200 W. Duval Mine Rd.  
**Date:** October 9, 2019  
**Arrival Time:** 12:00 pm  
**Departure Time:** 3:30 pm  
**Inspector:** M. Rogers  
**Spoke With:** Natalie Nunez, Senior Environmental Scientist, Kali Rhea, Environmental Manager  
**Phone #:**  
**Reason for Inspection:** Complaint Response

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Pima County Department of Environmental Quality (PDEQ) received a complaint regarding dust emissions from the Freeport McMoRan Sierrita Incorporated (FMSI) tailings impoundment during the afternoon of October 8, 2019. PDEQ Management immediately initiated a surveillance following receipt of the complaint and additionally on the following day in anticipation of forecasted wind gusts.

This off-site surveillance (conducted on October 9, 2019) was initialized in a parking lot located at 1393 W. Mission Twin Buttes Rd. I observed several plumes of dust generated over the center portion of the North Tailings Impoundment (attachment 1 photo 1). None of the dust plumes observed from that location were sustained, and none of them were observed crossing the property boundary of FMSI from that initial observation point.

I continued my off-site surveillance near the intersection of W. Continental Rd. and Duval Mine Rd. From that location I observed plumes of dust fumigating from the conjunction of Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the North Tailings Impoundment (attachment 2 photos 2 – 6). The plumes would rise above the surface of the impoundment, then drop into the desert floor below. Several of the plumes that dropped onto the desert floor crossed the property boundary between W. Continental Rd. and the property listed under the ownership of Phelps Dodge Sierrita Inc/Sierrita Mine (attachment 1 photos 7 – 9). Three plume events occurred during my 30 minute observation period. The observed plumes were sustained for periods of less than six minutes each. I was unable to conduct an Alternative Method 082 or a Method 9 Observation due to my location in reference to the sun. However, I observed three FMSI water trucks aggressively watering the north eastern corner of the impoundment in efforts to prevent the dust from leaving the impoundment (attachment 1 photos 10 – 11).

While observing, I was met by Ms. Natalie Nunez of FMSI. We exchanged formalities and then I informed her of the complaints received by PDEQ. I asked to inspect the tailings impoundment.

Ms. Nunez and I drove in separate vehicles to the FMSI gate where I conducted Inspection Rights (attachment 2).

I was escorted to the divider between the North and South Tailings Impoundment. I was able to observe the comprehensive measures employed by the Tailings Management Crew. FMSI had all six of its all-track vehicles employed at the time of my inspection. Three of them were in the process of applying Magnesium Chloride to the surface of the North Tailings Impoundment (attachment 1 photos 12 – 14). The other three were in the process of being resupplied (attachment 1 photo 15). The surface of the impoundment displayed indications of recent applications of Magnesium Chloride (attachment 1 photo 16). FMSI had also employed two tanker trucks of Magnesium Chloride (attachment 1 photo 17) in addition to the bladders of Magnesium Chloride located on the tailings road for rapid resupply. Additionally, Ms. Nunez informed me that FMSI had initiated 24 hour shifts for the tailings management crew to stabilize the tailings surface. FMSI had also directed its crews to utilize the hoses on the all-track vehicles to apply Magnesium Chloride to area that were inaccessible to vehicles. The inaccessible areas include the base of the “lake” where the surface cannot support the weight of the vehicle.

At the start of the dust event on October 8, FMSI was in the process of deposition on Phase 1 of the North Tailings Impoundment. Once FMSI was aware of the generation of fugitive dust, they switched deposition to Phase 2 in order to provide moisture to the area. Fumes of dust were still generated in Phase 2 at the time of my inspection (attachment 1 photo 18).

I concluded my inspection in the FMSI parking lot with an exit interview. Ms. Nunez and I were met by Ms. Kali Rhea, Environmental Manager for FMSI. I thanked them for their time and efforts, and informed them PDEQ would provide a compliance determination in a timely manner.

Attachments:

Photo Log dated October 9, 2019

Inspection Rights dated October 9, 2019