

DOE: Haze in Penang not caused by open burning



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KEPALA BATAS, Oct 11 — The haze situation that hit Penang recently was not caused by open burning within the state, but rather the wind movements that brought polluted air to the state, says the state's Department of Environment (DoE) Norazizi Adinan.

He said the factor had caused the Air Pollutant Index (API) reading to increase rapidly compared to the average daily reading contributed by vehicle smoke and industrial areas.

“The two air quality monitoring stations in Seberang Perai and Seberang Jaya usually record relatively high levels, but this is due to the industrial area and vehicles passing through Seberang Jaya every day.

“This area is quite ‘dense’ with air pollution. However, it is at a moderate level compared to other areas in the state that show better (API) readings of about 30-40.

“If there are external factors that add to the haze, then we will quickly reach the reading of 100,” he said when met by reporters after officiating an event to raise awareness on the open burning ban at the Seberang Perai City Council Sports Complex today.

Norazizi said that the haze issue was a cross-border problem and could not be prevented from entering the state, however, internal control measures could be taken to prevent the situation from getting worse.

He said so far, no hot spots of open burning have been recorded in the state except for one false alarm involving a factory in the Bukit Minyak Industrial Area which was detected via satellite.

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Meanwhile, Norazizi said from January 1 until yesterday, a total of 376 complaints of open burning were received by his side, most of which involved neighbourhoods and not the agricultural sector.

“Therefore, we urge the people of the state not to do open burning.

“We also hope that the residents can cooperate with the relevant monitoring government agencies so that the situation does not get worse,” he said.

According to the DoE’s Air Pollutant Index Management System (APIMS) website, as of 2 pm today, two areas in Penang recorded good API readings, namely Minden (49) and Balik Pulau (48), while two other areas recorded moderate APIs, namely Seberang Perai (55). and Seberang Jaya (55).

An API reading of zero to 50 indicates that the air quality is good; 51 to 100, moderate; 101 to 200, unhealthy; 201 to 300, very unhealthy; and above 300, hazardous. — Bernama