

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

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**By learning about the misfortunes of others, it is STI's hope to educate the public by creating a greater awareness of the hazards with storage and use of petroleum and chemicals. Please refer to the many industry standards and to the fire and building codes for further guidance on the safe operating practices with hazardous liquids. Thanks and credit for content are given to Dangerous Goods-Hazmat Group Network.**  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DangerousGoods/>

## **USA, WYO, ROCK SPRINGS**

**NOVEMBER 24 2011.**

### **TANK FARM BUILT BEFORE P&Z ESTABLISHED**

*David Martin*

The 44,000 gallon leak of unleaded gasoline at the ConocoPhillips site near Rock Springs brings questions about the tank farm's proximity to a campground and to Interstate 80.

Directly next to ConocoPhillip's tank farm is a KOA Campground, separated from the tank farm by a chain-link fence.

According to John Barton at the Sweetwater County Planning and Zoning Department, the proximity of those facilities has been a worrisome concern in the department for years.

"We would not be looking favorably on a similar situation (if the planning department were reviewing a similar proposal today)," Barton said.

However, Barton said the current zoning situation with the campground and tank farm, "is what it is."

Barton said the campground didn't have adequate water for fire protection until about five years ago, when the City of Rock Springs extended a waterline near the campground. Yet, despite the increased fire protection, Barton said the limited access into and out of the campground would result in most of the people in the campground running or driving towards White Mountain if a serious mishap occurred at the tank farm.

The land occupied by the campground is designated as CRS, which is for community and recreational services. The section where the ConocoPhillips tank farm is located is zoned as agricultural land, a basic placeholder designation used by the planning department. A conditional use permit is needed on agriculturally zoned land to install a tank farm.

However, the farm itself has existed since long before the county started regulating property zoning.

Barton said the county didn't start zoning property until the mid 1970s. Romilia Hinojosa, a spokesperson for ConocoPhillips, said the tank farm was built in 1963, the same year Interstate 80 was mostly completed.

Calls to KOA's management about how long the campground has existed were not returned as of press time. Documents in the planning and zoning office go back to 1990, when the campground was looking at expanding its site.

Stephanie Harsha, public involvement specialist for the Wyoming Department of Transportation's District Three office in Rock Springs, said WYDOT wasn't concerned about the spill because of the quick response and work by ConocoPhillips staff and emergency responders.

"They did an amazing job," Harsha said.

Additionally, Harsha said since the spill was liquid gasoline, WYDOT's concern wasn't as great as it would have been if there was a natural gas leak because it would have been more difficult to detect and more dangerous as the gas is a vapor.

If the gas ignited or if it seeped into the ground outside the tank farm, Harsha said WYDOT had plans in place to deal with those situations as a result of training and preparation they've previously undergone through working with Sweetwater County Emergency Management.

<http://www.greenriverstar.com/articles/2011/11/23/news/doc4ecd7894b42fe666913841.txt>

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## CANADA, NUNAVUT, CORNWALLIS ISLAND

NOVEMBER 24 2011.

### REPORT SHOWS RESOLUTE TANK FARM'S SPILL LINER FAULTY

#### WATER INSPECTION IN JULY FOUND LINER MEANT TO KEEP FUEL SPILLS OUT OF SOIL HAD RIPS

Federal documents show some of the liners in the spill containment berms at Resolute's fuel tank farm were found to be faulty months prior to a gasoline spill.

An estimated 87,000 litres of gasoline leaked from one of the tanks in late October when someone left valves open overnight.

Shortly after the spill, Nunavut's director of environmental protection Rob Eno told CBC News "all tank farms are required to have a bermed area with a liner underneath so that in the event of a tank failure the product won't seep into the ground but instead it will collect on top of that liner."

But a federal document shows that at least some of those liners had holes in them.

Andrew Keim, a water resources officer with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, filed a municipal water inspection form for Resolute on July 17.

Under the "fuel storage" section of that annual report, he noted "the liner [at the tank farm] was ... ripped in a number of locations."

The Nunavut government has sent officials to take samples from the site and determine if any of the gasoline leaked into the ground. There's no word yet on what they found.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/story/2011/11/23/north-resolute-spill-berm.html>

## USA, WA, SEATTLE

NOVEMBER 25 2011.

### OFFICIALS RESPONDING TO GAS SPILL IN DOWNTOWN SEATTLE

*Brian M. Rosenthal*

State officials are responding to a gasoline spill in downtown Seattle, although they don't know how much gas leaked or how it happened.

The gasoline apparently came from an underground storage tank at a former gas station on 9th Avenue and Madison Street, said Curt Hart, a spokesman for the state department of ecology. It got into the storm drain and is moving toward the south end of Lake Union.

"With all the rains we've been having, something has happened," Hart said. "The tank got breached in some way and leaked into the Seattle Public Utilities storm drain and mixed with drainage.

"We don't know how much gasoline was in the tank, don't know how it escaped and how it got into the drain," he added.

Seattle Public Utilities, which operates the storm drains, reported the issue to the Department of Ecology at about 4 p.m.

Officials don't think the spill will compromise public safety in any way, Hart said. More will be known in the morning, he added.

<http://today.seattletimes.com/2011/11/officials-responding-to-gas-spill-in-downtown-seattle/>

## CANADA, ALBA, EDMONTON

NOVEMBER 27 2011.

### THINK-TANK CALLS ON ALBERTA REGULATOR TO REVIEW OIL PIPELINE MONITORING, SAFETY

*John Cotter*

An environmental think-tank says recent spills in Alberta show it's time for regulators to review how aging oil pipelines are monitored and maintained.

Nathan Lemphers of the Pembina Institute says there's a greater chance of more spills because more oil is flowing through older lines.

"Given the number of major pipeline spills that happened this past spring, and now this Penn West pipeline spill, there is a need for the Energy Resources Conservation Board to reassess how it manages aging infrastructure," Lemphers said Friday.

"The ERCB needs to ensure that there is improved monitoring and maintenance of these aging pipelines and that they enforce existing pipeline safety regulations."

The board estimates there are about 400,000 kilometres of energy-related pipelines criss-crossing Alberta.

Last month, a Penn West (TSX:PWT) pipeline leaked 500,000 litres of watery oil near Swan Hills. The emulsion

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came from a pipeline connected to old oil wells.

The Calgary-based company has so far removed five million litres of water that was contaminated by the spill and 2,300 tonnes of soil. The ERCB said Friday that the site remains shut down and will not reopen until an investigation into what happened is complete.

Last April, Plains Midstream Canada reported a major breach of its 44-year-old Rainbow pipeline north of Peace River. About 4.5 million litres of oil escaped.

Kinder Morgan also reported a spill that month from its pipeline carrying diluted unprocessed oilsands crude near Chip Lake west of Edmonton.

The Pembina Pipeline Corp. (TSX:PIF) reported a spill on its line near Swan Hills in July.

Cleanup and remediation of the Plains Midstream spill continues.

The conservation board is responsible for regulating pipelines that begin and end in Alberta. Pipelines that cross provincial boundaries or the U.S. border are regulated by the federal National Energy Board.

The Alberta regulator said pipelines in the province have never been safer. The latest (2010) statistics show 1.6 incidents per thousand kilometres of pipeline.

"Alberta's pipeline system is very safe," said board spokesman Darin Barter.

"The ERCB expects companies to operate pipelines safely and within all regulatory requirements regardless of age."

The Pembina Institute said the breaches this year show the status quo isn't good enough.

"This recent spill highlights the environmental risks of pipelines in Alberta," Lemphers said. "More can and should be done to ensure this kind of spill does not happen again."

<http://www.canadianbusiness.com/article/58912--think-tank-calls-on-alberta-regulator-to-review-oil-pipeline-monitoring-safety>

## CANADA, ONT, KINGSTON

NOVEMBER 27 2011.

### CONTRACTOR AND EMPLOYEE FINED IN DEATH AT WESTERN BIODIESEL

*Evan Careen*

For a family in Kingston, Ont. an almost four-year wait to find out what would happen to the companies that they believe lead to the death of their 33-year-old son. GLP Instrumentation and an employee of Western Biodiesel, where GLP was doing some work were both fined for their role in the death of Kevin Lodge, a welder at the Western Biodiesel plant in Aldersyde in 2008. For his father, a fine simply isn't enough.

"They murdered him, as far as I'm concerned," said David Lodge. "They may as well have put their hands around his neck and did it themselves."

What Lodge is referring to is an explosion that claimed his sons life on April 14, 2008 when he was welding a tank used to store chemicals at the plant. The engineers who designed the building warned that welding should not be done on the tanks once they were in production but Lodge was never told that, he was in fact told to weld a fitting onto one of the tanks, which resulted in the explosion.

Davis Lodge said his son was a very safety-conscious person and would never have worked on the tank had he known.

"I talked to him three days before and I told him to be careful and he told me he always was," Lodge said. "He would never have done anything to jeopardize his safety."

He said he is also unhappy that all the charges against Western Biodiesel itself were dropped, stating that a company should be held responsible for what does on in its plant. Western has since ceased production and the company is now for sale. Earlier this year it was hit with a \$160,000 fine for illegally dumping water laced with methanol.

To add insult to injury, a lawsuit was filed against his sons' estate for damage to the building. Lodge said he doesn't know what will happen to that now but his lawyer is advising him and his ex-wife to pursue civil litigation of their own.

GLP Instrumentation was fined \$431,250 for their role and Sebastian Berube, the former vice-president of technology and operations for Western Biodiesel, was fined \$17,250. GLP was given 30 days to pay the fine and Berube was given two years. The Times attempted to reach GLP but all phone numbers for the company are out of service.

While a fine might be cold comfort for a family who lost a son, the crown prosecutor who handled the case said it was the only avenue to punish those involved.

"Nothing can bring back their son and the best we can do is levy substantial fines against those involved,"

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Moira Vale said. "It shows the company they cannot behave this way in terms of safety and sends a message to the industry."

Vale said it's a difficult situation because you can't put a company in jail and fines are the only option allowed under the legislation.

Lodge told the Times that from what he understands GLP has declared bankruptcy and probably won't even pay the fine anyway. Vale said she has no information on this but even if the company were bankrupt the crown would be seeking the money.

"We would be a creditor they have to pay, just like anyone else," she said. "If not a lot of companies might choose that option, it might be cheaper to declare bankruptcy than to pay fines."

Vane said the fines are substantial, a lot more than one would receive in a criminal court and onerous upon the company and the individual charged.

But in Lodge's mind, no fine would ever be enough to pay for the loss of his son.

<http://www.highrivertimes.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=3383903>

## **CANADA, SK, SASKATOON**

**NOVEMBER 30 2011.**

### **CREWS CLEAN UP SMALL OIL SPILL**

Workers from the Queen Elizabeth Power Plant were busy Friday and Monday cleaning up a small oil spill that caused a sheen on the South Saskatchewan River.

SaskPower spokesperson James Parker said on Friday, water inadvertently flowed into a tank in the plant south of Saskatoon, pushing about five litres of oil out of a tank and down a drain. The oil went through an outflow pipe and into the South Saskatchewan, he said.

The utility has permanent booms in the river to help contain such spills, he said. Crews also went out onto the river to mop up the oil with absorbent pads Friday, he said.

SaskPower notified the City of Saskatoon and Ministry of the Environment immediately, Parker said.

However, on Monday afternoon, a city worker called the power plant to report there was a sheen of oil visible on the river. Parker said a couple of workers returned to the river with absorbent material to clean up the oil.

Even a small amount of oil can create a visible slick, Parker said. "Unfortunately, this is what happened in this case," he said. "It happens rarely, but as you can see, it happens."

SaskPower will investigate how the leak happened and make any changes, if necessary, to prevent future spills, Parker said.

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/news/Crews+clean+small+spill/5781192/story.html#ixzz1gKsx0XrT>

## **USA, AZ, MARINE CORPS AIR STATION YUMA**

**NOVEMBER 30 2011.**

### **FUEL LEAK INVESTIGATED AT MCAS YUMA**

*James Gilbert*

Officials at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma are investigating the cause of a fuel leak and possible contamination of soil at the base.

"The Marine Corps and the Air Station take this incident very seriously. We are committed to restoration and repair efforts of the affected area until it is cleaned, with as little effect on the environment as possible," a release from base officials stated.

According to Capt. Staci Reidinger, director of public affairs for MCAS Yuma, the leak was discovered at about 2 p.m. Nov. 22 by a Marine who saw what appeared to be fuel seeping up from the ground from a JP-8 fuel pipeline to the pumps in an area of the flightline near the helicopter staging area.

Reidinger said Marines at the site discontinued their fueling operations and turned off all cut-off valves along the pipeline in order to stop any further leaking. She added it is not known how long fuel had been leaking or how much had escaped the line.

Station environmental management officials responded immediately and began determining the extent of the contamination.

Reidinger said contractors were called in the same day and began excavating the area to determine the size and depth of the leak. She added that they have also been removing the contaminated soil to an area where it can be recycled.

"Regardless of the size of the leak we want to make sure that we are taking every precaution. We hope that

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we can minimize the further impact to the environment and we're working as quickly as possible."

As a result of the leak, Reidinger said, certain fuel pumps are no longer being used and the air station has adjusted its fueling operations to maintain its current flight schedule.

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality officials do not believe the leak will affect local drinking water.

<http://www.yumasun.com/articles/officials-74825-yuma-leak.html#ixzz1gKtRERlh>

## **USA, FLA, JACKSONVILLE**

**NOVEMBER 30 2011.**

### **FLORIDA ROCK SUES ST. AUGUSTINE GAS STATION IN EXPLOSIVE AUGUST FIRE**

The company that delivered and pumped gas into a tank at a St. Augustine gas station, overflowing it and leading to an explosive fire, claims the station now owes it money for damages to its equipment.

Florida Rock & Tank Lines Inc. filed a lawsuit Nov. 14 in Jacksonville, asserting that Coomes Oil & Supply Inc., which owned the BP gas station at 215 Florida 16, was negligent in the August incident. The suit says Coomes then did not live up to damage compensations as part of a contract agreement.

Coomes placed an order for 7,800 gallons of regular gas, more than what the 12,000-gallon, above-ground tank could hold with fuel already inside, the suit says.

It says Coomes was also in violation of federal and state requirements to safely maintain above-ground tanks, which are held to higher standards because of their increased risks. Some of the standards include the use of devices that help prevent flames from flaring and an adequately gauge tank levels.

The suit adds that in April 2009 the companies signed into an agreement that made the gas station financially responsible for damages as the result of an overflow. But Florida Rock maintains it was never compensated for damages to their equipment despite the fact that it had paid for a portion of the cleanup costs.

Florida Rock is asking for a minimum of \$15,000 in damages, a common figure for lawsuits filed at the state level.

Coomes is also facing a lawsuit filed by 61-year-old truck driver David Cowles, who pumped the gasoline into the tank and was severely burned in the fire.

<http://jacksonville.com/opinion/blog/422234/charles-broward/2011-11-29/florida-rock-sues-st-augustine-gas-station-explosive>

## **UGANDA, MUKONO, KYAMPISI, KALAGI**

**NOVEMBER 30 2011.**

### **PUMP ATTENDANT DIES IN A FUEL TANK**

It was shock and grief today in Kalagi trading center in Kyampisi Sub-County, Mukono district when the residents found a fuel pump attendant dead in the underground fuel tank. The deceased has been identified as Blavio Otheino who is reported to have died early in the morning. Othiono is reported to have been on the night duty and that by midnight he was seen serving customers. The police suspect that Othieno could have wanted to siphon fuel but he was choked in the process.

<http://www.ugpulse.com/uganda-news/people/pump-attendant-dies-in-a-fuel-tank/22845.aspx##>

## **USA, MI, GRATIOT CO**

**DECEMBER 1 2011.**

### **ITHACA NEIGHBORHOOD DEALING WITH GAS LEAK**

*James Felton*

Ithaca city manager Chelsey Foster had to evacuate his home because of gas fumes.

"It's really been nerve racking. To get bumped out of your house on Thanksgiving weekend is tough on the whole family." Foster said.

Back in October, Foster was doing laundry in his basement when he smelled gas for the first time. The city investigated the odor and traced it back to a Beacon and Bridge gas station just down the street from Foster's house. The state Department of Environmental Quality found a leaky underground tank and sealed it. Despite fixing the tank, the smell didn't go away at Foster's house.

"The smell will be here one day so strong that you just need to get out of the house. I've had a couple of people stop by and 10 minutes later have a headache from the fumes." Foster said.

Foster is one of at least a dozen people who have been affected by the leak. He's hoping to get some answers from Beacon and Bridge along with the Michigan State Department of Environmental Quality soon.

783, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 789, 790, 791, 792

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"Do we know whether it's safe to be in these homes, and if we don't know that we need their help to determine that."

Ithaca city leaders will meet with Beacon and Bridge officials Thursday at 10 a.m. The meeting will take place at Ithaca City Hall.

We could not reach a Beacon and Bridge spokesperson for an on camera interview. However, the company did issue the following press release:

"Beacon and Bridge is a small Michigan based company operating several convenience store and gas station outlets throughout Michigan. The company is community based and prides itself on offering locally produced products from Michigan.

At one of the locations in Ithaca recently, a problem was suspected with a tank as the company was having difficulties reconciling its fuel logs. As a result, the company took immediate steps to evaluate the tank and uncovered damage to a safety valve. The equipment was promptly fixed and the tank was tested for tightness to assure that it worked properly in the future. Beacon and Bridge immediately hired experts in the field of environmental restoration and worked with local officials to make them aware of the issue.

In mid to late October City officials contacted Beacon and Bridge about fuel vapors in and around the adjacent area from local residents. The City Manager and Fire Chief, working in conjunction with management from Beacon and Bridge, continued to investigate the source of the vapors and brought in additional environment experts to monitor and explore the source of the vapors. The vapors were suspected to have come from the sewer, so a decision was made to flush the sewer at the expense of the company to resolve the problem. City officials, the fire department and the company were in agreement on the decision to flush the sewer.

After the sewer was flushed, additional reports of gasoline vapors surfaced and additional environmental experts were called in to survey the problem. Several residents noticed vapors in their homes sporadically, so monitoring equipment was brought on site and utilized to monitor the air quality. At least one resident was advised to vacate their resident and spend a few days at a local hotel with expenses paid for by the company. Meanwhile, a decision to install a vapor extraction system was made by the company to correct the problem for area residences. Additional homes continue to be tested in the surrounding areas to determine the extent of the problem and ensure that all residents were safe and the problem was being corrected.

Beacon and Bridge management has been in constant contact with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, the City Manager, Fire Chief and local residents to monitor the situation and correct any issues arising from the problem. The company has, at its expense, contracted with several environmental firms to ensure that the situation is corrected safely and correctly. The environmental companies, state departments, city officials, and Beacon and Bridge are working together to bring about a quick and safe resolution to this issue for area residents.

Beacon and Bridge is committed to serving local Michigan communities with the highest quality service and best locally produced products available. The company is committed to the communities it serves, the environment, and the customers it serves. Being a small locally owned firm allows Beacon and Bridge to act quickly and do the right thing. "We live here, we work here, and we are proud to be here in Michigan and Ithaca" said Vice-President Dan Wynn. Beacon and Bridge was established in 1975. The company hires local residents to operate each of its 28 facilities through-out Michigan."

<http://www.wnem.com/story/16158954/ithaca-neighborhood-dealing-with-gas-leak>

## **AUSTRALIA, VICTORIA, MELBOURNE**

**DECEMBER 2 2011.**

### **WORKER DIES IN SEWAGE TANK IN BANGHOLME, MELBOURNE**

*Angus Thompson*

The body of a worker who went missing while carrying out work at Melbourne's main sewage treatment plant has been found.

However, police say it will take some time to recover the body.

The 52-year-old Endeavour Hills man - who was working for Melbourne Water - went missing while carrying out routine sampling work at Melbourne Water's Eastern Treatment Plant in Bangholme just after 7am (AEDT) yesterday.

Rescuers spent more than eight hours scouring the massive network of pipes, tanks and drains to find the body just after 8pm last night.

783, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 789, 790, 791, 792

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It was the third workplace death within 24 hours.

A 26-year-old man died in hospital from his head injuries after a 150kg piece of machinery fell 6m on to him at a Campbellfield boat manufacturing business yesterday afternoon, and a man died when he was struck by a street sweeper at a roadworks site in Bayswater on Wednesday night.

## **Terrible death**

It is understood the man fell in a pumping system where the raw sewerage flows at about 6m per second.

Colleagues raised the alarm at about 8.45am after realising the man was missing, spotting his work equipment still at the side of the tank.

WorkSafe spokesman Michael Birt said how the man fell into the sewage tank was still being investigated, but that there were guard rails at the edge of the pit.

Melbourne Water managing director Shaun Cox expressed his shock and sadness at the news and extended his sincere condolences to the man's family and workmates.

"This is a very distressing time for his family and for us at Melbourne Water," Mr Cox said in a statement.

"Together with ALS Group, the sampling contractor, we are offering our full support to his family, colleagues, friends and our people.

"Safety is our highest priority and we'll be supporting Victoria Police and WorkSafe in their investigation.

"We'll also be conducting our own investigation."

Mr Birt said there hadn't been three workplace deaths in Victoria in one day since May 2001.

"As far as fatalities go it's certainly the worst day in 10 years," Mr Birt said.

The Eastern Treatment Plant treats about 40 per cent of Melbourne's sewage, about 330 million litres a day – with waste water coming from the city's southeast and eastern suburbs.

Police will prepare a report for the coroner.

## **Man suffers head injuries in Laverton North**

Meanwhile, a man was taken to hospital with critical head injuries after a workplace accident in Laverton North yesterday.

A WorkSafe spokeswoman said it appeared the man had been doing repair work underneath a dock leveler when it collapsed on him at about 1.30pm.

He sustained serious head injuries and was taken to the Royal Melbourne Hospital in a critical condition.

## **WorkSafe warning**

The tragic incidents follow the deaths of a 73-year-old farmer gored by a bull, a 45-year-old man who fell to his death from a cherry picker, and a 46-year-old man who was crushed by a vehicle at a factory.

WorkSafe health and safety executive director Ian Forsyth warned employers against cutting corners to get jobs done ahead of Christmas.

"What we have seen in the last 10 days is a reminder of the bad old days," he said yesterday.

Mr Forsyth said Victoria had an enviable workplace safety record.

"It is ironic that Victorian workplaces have never been safer," he said.

"They are the safest in the country."

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/body-found-in-sewage-tank/story-fn7x8me2-1226211145784>

## **USA, CA, BAKERSFIELD**

**DECEMBER 2 2011.**

### **TANK EXPLODES, CATCHES FIRE AT REFINERY**

*Rachel Cook and John Cox*

A 2.5 million gallon storage tank explosion at the Alon USA Bakersfield Refinery shook nearby businesses on Rosedale Highway shortly after 3 p.m. Wednesday.

No one was reported killed or injured, but a thick column of black smoke spewing from the property could be seen from downtown Bakersfield.

"The whole entire building shook and the fans shook like crazy," said Mandy Clark, an employee at Rosedale Pawn down the street from the refinery. At first, Clark assumed an earthquake caused the tremors but then heard a noise like a car alarm. She thought someone had backed a vehicle into the building because the building trembled so hard.

Closer to the refinery, John DiMolfetto, service manager at Transmission Dr. Plus, said he and his coworkers thought the noise was the refinery checking its alarm but quickly realized it wasn't a test.

"You could actually see flames. You could see a lot of flames and smoke (coming from the property),"

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DiMolfetto said.

There was no immediate indication of what caused the explosion, said Chad Druten, a spokesman for Paramount Petroleum, part of the refinery's owner, Dallas-based Alon USA Energy Inc. He said the tank was not in service at the time.

Kern County Fire Department spokesman Sean Collins said the tank was in the process of being cleaned and a small amount of diesel sludge in the tank somehow caught fire. Firefighters used water to protect equipment near the damaged tank. They extinguished the remaining fire at the bottom of the tank with foam, Collins said.

By 4 p.m., the column of smoke had diminished to a smaller plume of gray smoke and soon after fire trucks began to leave.

Collins confirmed that there were no injuries.

The refinery continues to operate and no evacuations took place at the plant or at surrounding homes, according to Collins.

Druten said the area around the tank was shut down and secured, and that an investigation has been launched to determine what caused the accident.

A news release issued by the company said there were no reports of any impact on the surrounding community.

The 103-employee plant processes vacuum gas oil, a byproduct of Paramount Petroleum's Long Beach-area refining operations.

The Bakersfield refinery was scheduled to cease production for two weeks in December while it undergoes routine maintenance.

The refinery sat idle for about 28 months until Alon reopened it in June. The company bought it out of bankruptcy from the former owner, Utah-based Flying J Inc.

The refinery processes more than 10,000 barrels of gas oil a day, turning it into roughly 300,000 gallons of diesel and 140,000 gallons or more of gasoline daily. It also makes smaller amounts of propane, butane and other petroleum products.

About 50 firefighters from the Kern County Fire Department responded to the refinery fire after Wednesday's explosion with help from the Bakersfield Fire Department, Kern County Sheriff's Department, the Kern County Environmental Health Division and Hall Ambulance.

<http://www.bakersfield.com/news/business/economy/x986931360/Tank-explodes-catches-fire-at-refinery>

## USA, WASHINGTON

DECEMBER 2 2011.

### NEW SCRUTINY OF WORKER SAFETY EXCLUDES SOME CHEMICAL PLANTS

*Chris Hamby*

Worries about fires, explosions and chemical releases prompted the federal agency in charge of workplace safety on Wednesday to expand a special inspection program focusing on the nation's chemical plants. Regulators believe the industry is particularly vulnerable to such hazards, meriting the closer attention.

Yet some plants will continue to be shielded from the special inspections, despite past worker deaths, because of their status as "model workplaces."

"Far too many workers are injured and killed in preventable incidents at chemical facilities around the country," said David Michaels, the head of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, in announcing the broadening of the pilot program, which began in 2009.

Michaels said inspectors would "cover chemical facilities nationwide to ensure that all required measures are taken to protect workers."

But the agency opted to exempt sites that participate in its Voluntary Protection Programs, known as VPP. As iWatch News has reported, more than 80 workers have died since 2000 at these sites OSHA has deemed "model workplaces" – from power plants to paper mills and shipyards.

Companies, however, have rarely faced serious consequences, even when inspectors identified safety violations related to the fatal accident.

The exemption from regular inspections, including those conducted under special emphasis programs, has particular resonance for companies in the chemical manufacturing industry, which is both the target of the new initiative and the largest industry sector in VPP.

At least 18 of the deaths at VPP sites since 2000 occurred at chemical plants.

Three of these deaths occurred at two plants owned by Eastman Chemical Company – cases highlighted in 783, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 789, 790, 791, 792

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a recent story by iWatch News. Regulators deemed two of them preventable and issued violations to the company, but both sites remain in VPP and beyond the reach of the newly expanded program.

Michaels said in Wednesday's announcement that inspections conducted under the pilot program uncovered similar dangers to what the agency found in its program targeting oil refineries.

Under that initiative, too, OSHA exempted VPP sites, but, as iWatch News has reported, seven workers have died at these off-limits refineries since the program began in 2007.

An OSHA spokesperson said the exemptions were "an incentive and a matter of OSHA policy."  
<http://www.iwatchnews.org/2011/11/04/7261/deaths-model-workplaces-missing-list-federal-overseers>

## **USA, AZ, YUMA**

**DECEMBER 2 2011.**

### **MCAS YUMA OFFICIALS FIND CONTAMINATED SOIL AFTER LEAK IN FUEL LINE**

*Jennifer Jones*

Military officials continue to investigate the extent and cause of a fuel line leak at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma.

As of Wednesday, contractors on site have located contamination 20 feet below the ground at the initial discovery point. They have excavated nearly 1,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil.

Officials say the contaminated soil is being moved on to impermeable barriers at the clean-up site to prevent continued exposure to the ground and further transported to a hazardous material-approved landfill.

The leak was discovered last Tuesday on the bases's flightline.

Military officials are taking this incident very seriously. "Ensuring the safety of Air Station personnel and the local community is my highest priority. In order to do this, we are testing local water supplies on an ongoing basis to ensure safety compliance as well as working closely with our environmental clean-up teams to expedite the restoration and repair of the affected area," stated Col. Robert C. Kuckuk, MCAS Yuma Station Commander.

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<http://www.kswt.com/story/16170245/mcas-yuma-officials-find-contaminated-soil-after-leak-in-fuel-line>

## **PHILIPPINES, MANILA**

**DECEMBER 3 2011.**

### **WEST TOWER REPAIR 'ALMOST' COMPLETE**

### **CLEAN-UP OPERATIONS HAVE TO DATE RECOVERED ABOUT A MILLION LITERS OF PETROLEUM**

*Anna Liza T. Villas*

The First Philippine Industrial Corporation (FPIC) claimed that the basements of the West Tower condominium in Barangay Bangkal, Makati City, where petroleum had leaked were "almost completely back to its original condition."

The building was inspected by FPIC President Tony Mabasa, FPIC's Bangkal remediation project manager Nards Ablaza and environment advocate Gina Lopez, along with a group of condominium residents led by unit owner Paul Cruz to assess the progress of the repair work.

Gas from a nearby pipeline owned by the FPIC had leaked into the basements of the condominium, forcing the evacuation of tenants. The leak also affected several houses near the building.

The company replaced the electromechanical equipment with brand new units that were submerged in water when the basements were flooded.

Ablaza said the clean-up operations have to date recovered about a million liters of petroleum from the building.

The FPIC also claimed to have restored power in the common areas, repaired leaking water pipes, cleaned up  
783, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 789, 790, 791, 792

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

the lobby, corridors and roof deck, and checked the elevators.

"From day one, FPIC has utilized and continues to utilize all available resources and the best expert advice to rehabilitate West Tower, as well as remediate Bangkal's affected areas. We have never waived from our commitment to get the building safe and habitable for the West Tower residents to return home to. We can only welcome their full cooperation to complete our rehabilitation program," Mabasa said.

Lopez called on all concerned parties to a meeting to air their concerns and discuss the full spectrum of possibilities on how to best complete West Tower's rehabilitation.

Another group of residents claimed that what the FPIC has been doing were "cosmetic."

Manual Chuansu, one of the unit owners forced to leave the building due to the oil leak, said the lobby and basement of the condominium were newly-painted but there were still portions that show signs of leaks.

Chuansu also said the FPIC "unilaterally and without permission" revised the building's sump pit pipeline, preventing water from entering the pit and endangering the structure of the whole building.

"They are changing the design of the building. We have officially written the FPIC to desist from doing the move and return the pipeline configuration to its original setup. At present, the FPIC continue to refuse to do so," he said.

He challenged the FPIC to present a clean-up plan and timeline covering the areas affected by the oil leak in Bangkal.

"We only want an honest-to-goodness plan and not just a plan for cosmetic purposes only," Chuansu said.

<http://www.mb.com.ph/articles/343492/west-tower-repair-almost-complete>

## AUSTRALIA, NEW SOUTH WALES, NEWCASTLE

DECEMBER 8 2011.

### RESIDENTS ANGER OVER LATEST ORICA LEAK

A Stockton resident says explosives maker Orica's emergency warning system for its Newcastle plant is not good enough.

Yesterday about 20,000 litres of ammonium nitrate solution overflowed from a tank, with some spilling over a bund and soaking into the ground.

It is the fourth incident at the site since August and comes just a day after Orica was given approval to restart part of the plant.

Orica and NSW Health say the incident posed no risk to the surrounding community, but resident Rick Banyard says he was notified by Orica about the incident an hour after hearing it from someone else in the community.

"Here we have the first time the warning system is going to be used and it's clearly failed," he said.

"If there had been an escape of significant gas from the factory and it was blowing my way I would think that in 57 minutes I would probably be dead."

Stockton residents group president Kate Johnson says if Orica is trying to regain the community's trust, it is failing miserably.

"It does seem to be a bit of a circus," she said.

"I mean it seems to be that its an ailing plant that the plant management there just don't seem to be able to operate effectively.

"They haven't made it through 24 hours of operation so to me it seems like there doesn't seem to be control of the equipment that they have there."

Minister for Environment Robyn Parker says while Orica notified the EPA about the spill immediately, another incident is unacceptable.

"Orica has issues to address it is unacceptable, it's an ongoing problem," she said.

"What we need to know from Orica is how they are going to address their ongoing concerns.

"The community needs to have confidence in Orica and currently that confidence is very much shaken."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-12-08/residents-anger-over-latest-origa-leak/3719196?section=business>

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

**USA, CO, DENVER**

**DECEMBER 8 2011.**

## **AURORA SAYS TOXIC LEAK WON'T AFFECT CITY WATER QUALITY**

*Sara Castellanos*

Aurora water officials say they see no reason for concern about local water quality because of a threat of toxic chemicals seeping from a refinery upstream from one city water source.

Federal officials say a trench dug to block toxic chemicals from seeping from a refinery into a creek northwest of Aurora is working.

Environmental Protection Agency spokesman Matthew Allen said Monday a 240-foot trench completed over the weekend is preventing a gasoline-like substance from seeping from the Suncor Energy refinery into Sand Creek and the South Platte River.

The city's Praire Waters Project pumps groundwater from the South Platte downstream of the spill back to Aurora for treatment and use in the city's water system.

Crews over the weekend worked in subfreezing temperatures cleaning up the spill, which may have been caused by a leaking pipe.

The EPA said crews have recovered between dozens of gallons of an oily substance, but it was unclear how much may have seeped into the creek or made it into the river.

Aurora's water supply is derived primarily from snowmelt runoff in the Colorado, Arkansas and South Platte river basins far upstream of the and unrelated to the toxic spill. Aurora Water officials received notice from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment about an unknown substance potentially in a tributary of the South Platte River on Nov. 28, said Greg Baker, spokesman for Aurora Water.

"We have not been notified at this point that the spill has directly affected the Platte," Baker said.

Aurora's water supply is not in jeopardy, he said.

"While a small percentage (of Aurora's water) comes from the South Platte downstream of the impacted site, we are not currently taking water from the river because of our typical, seasonal, low water demands," he said. "If contamination were to occur at a time when we were using our South Platte River supply, we have numerous protocols in place to ensure that any impact on the river will not affect our drinking water supply."

Aurora Water officials have not been asked to assist with any federal efforts to dig a trench.

[http://www.aurorasentinel.com/hp\\_metro/article\\_ceb083f6-2017-11e1-a9cc-0019bb2963f4.html](http://www.aurorasentinel.com/hp_metro/article_ceb083f6-2017-11e1-a9cc-0019bb2963f4.html)

**AUSTRALIA, VICTORIA, MELBOURNE**

**DECEMBER 10 2011.**

## **OIL LEAK FORCES MFB OUT OF HEADQUARTERS**

Staff have been evacuated from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) headquarters in East Melbourne. A 500 litre tanker used to power a generator leaked overnight and diesel has contaminated three floors of the building. Seven fire fighting trucks have been redeployed around the CBD and up to 50 administrative staff have been sent home. Operations Commander Ross Trimboli says the spill will not affect the MFB's fire fighting capabilities. "Fire fighting capabilities really won't affect us at all because we're deploying all of our appliances in strategic locations," he said. "It just really puts the inconvenience on the fire fighters in relation to their mess facilities and their normal routine in relation to three meals and sleep accommodations."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-12-09/oil-leak-forces-mfb-out-of-headquarters/3722124?section=vic>

**USA, ME, OTISFIELD**

**DECEMBER 10 2011.**

## **OTISFIELD OIL SPILL CAUSED BY THIEF CUTTING COPPER TUBING**

*Leslie H. Dixon*

Crews continued to work this week to remove contaminated soil from the Otisfield Community School after someone cut the copper tubing from an oil and propane tank over Thanksgiving Day weekend in an apparent attempt to sell the scrap metal.

The copper tubing was estimated by school Superintendent Rick Colpitts to be worth only about \$30, but the damage being caused by the cleanup of more than 100 gallons of spilled oil is expected to cost hundreds if not thousands of dollars. The cost includes removal of a portable classroom to accommodate the necessary removal of contaminated soil.

Officials said the thief took a bolt cutter and snipped copper tubing that went to outside oil and propane tanks

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# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

feeding two portable classrooms on the east side of the main school. One attempt was unsuccessful because the tubing was buried in the ground, but another attempt to get the tubing was successful.

About half a tank full of No. 4 fuel oil leaked from the encased 240-gallon oil tank when the line was cut outside the encasement, Jon Woodard of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection said.

On Tuesday, the DEP, with the assistance of Boom Technology, a 24-hour emergency response team out of Gorham, began digging the site, which is on a 15-foot strip of land between two portable classrooms on the east side of the school. But after a hole an estimated 8 feet deep and 10 feet wide had been dug, workers determined on Wednesday that it would be necessary to move one of two portable classrooms from the site to allow them access to the contaminated dirt under that unit. The classroom was moved to the back of the school's parking lot on Thursday afternoon.

Because the soil is hard silt, it is hard to dig, Woodard said.

"You can't plan for vandalism," Woodard said of future plans to protect the site that could include using a partial iron pipe.

While the school's insurance and the DEP's own insurance program for such environmental problems will cover the costs of the cleanup, Colpitts said the school will have to test the water over the next six months to make sure no oil has gone into the private well. No cost has been determined yet.

<http://www.sunjournal.com/news/oxford-hills/2011/12/10/otisfield-oil-spill-caused-thief-cutting-copper-tubing/1125487>

## **USA, W.VA, MARSHALL CO**

**DECEMBER 14 2011.**

### **GAS WELL HOLDING TANK IN MARSHALL COUNTY CATCHES FIRE**

A holding tank at a Marshall County gas well caught fire Dec. 12, briefly forcing about 30 people from their homes.

Marshall County Emergency Services Deputy Director Michael L. Mucheck said the fire was on Gaster's Corley well pad on Rines Ridge Road about 4.5 miles from state Route 2.

He said a vent on a water flowback tank caught fire.

"It damaged some of the equipment in the vicinity, but the actual well was in no danger," Mucheck said. "The shutdown system worked as designed. The biggest thing was waiting for the tanks to cool down to make sure there were no flare-ups."

Mucheck said the entire incident played out over about a 90-minute time period.

"Things could always be a lot worse," he said. "But everything worked as designed. The safety precautions worked as designed."

He said the Gaster employee assigned to the well site spotted the problem and "hit the shutdown button."

"They evacuated the area just to err on the side of caution, which is part of our protocol," he said.

"Everything went as planned, there were no injuries," he said. "The fire was out, the vent fire was out, when our units arrived. We just had to extinguish the equipment. A couple tires on a trailer were on fire."

Mucheck said authorities are still trying to determine what triggered the problem.

"We're not really sure," he said. "It could have been static electricity. It could have been a spark."

<http://www.statejournal.com/story/16314516/gas-well-holding-tank-in-marshall-county-catches-fire>

## **SYRIA, TARTOUS**

**DECEMBER 14 2011.**

### **WELDING SPARK CAUSES FUEL TANK EXPLOSION IN TARTOUS, INJURING TWO PEOPLE**

A Fuel tank exploded during welding operation to install a protective cover over the gauge, causing the injury of two people in Hammam Qenieh village in Tartous governorate. Head of al-Sheikh Badr City Council, Shhadeh Ibrahim, said that a welding spark caused the explosion, adding that fire engines immediately headed to the site of the accident to extinguish the tank and other two nearby cars on fire. He added that the two injured, who are the owner of the welding shop and another person, were transported to al-Basel Hospital to receive medical treatment.

<http://www.sana.sy/eng/21/2011/12/13/388108.htm>

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

## **USA, AKA, FAIRBANKS**

**DECEMBER 15 2011.**

### **POLLUTION CASE SEES SENTENCING UNDER ALASKA LAW**

*Sam Friedman*

The owner and the operator of a Tok gas station were both sentenced to pay \$2,500 but avoided any jail time Tuesday for repeatedly failing to have their underground fuel tanks inspected over a period of about 10 years.

The sentencing wraps up the first successful criminal prosecution under the relatively new state law that makes it a misdemeanor to negligently fail to have underground tanks inspected. Although the criminal case is completed, a decade-long conflict between the management of Wadsworth Texaco (also known as Camper City Super Service) and state environmental regulators continues in civil court.

Business owner Norma Alicia Wadsworth, 62, and 59-year-operator Myron J. Bearson had been under scrutiny for not having their fuel tanks in compliance since not long after new laws took effect in 2000, according to court documents. The gas station burned in 2007, but business and problems with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation resumed not long after.

The gas station also has a long-standing conflict with neighboring property owner Tanacross Inc. which says the old cars and other junk on the gas station property encroaches on their land. According to a victim-impact letter the corporation submitted to the court, the appearance of the "burnt out wreck of the gas station," along with concern about "leaking automotive fluids" lowered the value of the corporation's land and influenced a recent decision by the Tanana Chiefs Conference to not put a health clinic on corporation land along the Alaska Highway near the gas station.

In 2010, the state filed criminal and civil suits against Wadsworth and Bearson. At the time a plea agreement was reached, the criminal case involved fourteen charges, including failure to close a substandard underground fuel tank, littering, a junk yard violation and failure to have appropriate insurance. Under the plea agreement Wadsworth and Bearson pleaded guilty to one count of failure to have a third-party inspection. The other thirteen counts were dismissed.

But at Tuesday's sentencing, which lasted all day at the Tok Courthouse, the two made it clear they do not believe they were spilling fuel or polluting even if they were out of compliance with the letter of the law. Witnesses included a man who informally inspected the tanks for them and a Fairbanks engineer who designed the fuel tanks and said they exceed the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's standards. Wadsworth and Bearson both said in their own comments that they were picked on by regulators.

[http://newsminer.com/view/full\\_story/16791325/article-Pollution-case-sees-sentencing-under-Alaska-law?instance=home\\_news\\_window\\_left\\_top\\_1](http://newsminer.com/view/full_story/16791325/article-Pollution-case-sees-sentencing-under-Alaska-law?instance=home_news_window_left_top_1)

## **USA, VA, GRETNA**

**DECEMBER 19 2011.**

### **MAN WHO DIED IN GRETNA ACCIDENT WAS TESTING TANK VESSEL**

*John Crane*

The man who died after an industrial accident Friday at Amthor International in Gretna was performing a test inside a tank vessel when the incident occurred, said an investigator with the Pittsylvania County Sheriff's Office.

Kevin Lee Jacobs, 26, of Gretna, died after the accident that happened at around 1:30 p.m.

Jacobs was unresponsive when found by fellow employees, police said Saturday, adding that she is not sure what type of test was being conducted on the tank vessel. The cause of death is unknown, she said.

Jennifer Wester, director of cooperative programs with the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry's Occupational Safety and Health Program, said Friday officials there are investigating.

"We do not discuss characteristics of cases we investigate," Wester said.

A representative with Amthor declined to comment when reached by telephone Friday.

The Pittsylvania County Sheriff's Office is waiting to find out the cause of Jacobs' death from the Medical Examiner's Office in Roanoke, police said.

Gretna Fire and Rescue responded to the accident. Centra One, a helicopter transport, and Regional One EMS were called to the scene, but later asked to disregard.

Amthor International manufactures truck-mounted tanks. The company announced Tuesday it will be adding 50 jobs to its current staff of about 60 full-time employees.

Wester told the Danville Register & Bee the OSHP is trying to find out whether safety and health standards violations caused the accident. The agency's probes include site investigation, witness interviews and equipment checks, Wester said.

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

The OSHP is required to complete investigations within six months.

<http://www2.godanriver.com/news/2011/dec/17/man-who-died-gretna-accident-was-testing-tank-vess-ar-1552020/>