

# 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, ME, THOMASTOWN**

**DECEMBER 29 2009.**

### **THOMASTON TANK EXPLOSION RULED ACCIDENTAL**

#### **NO ONE SERIOUSLY INJURED**

The state fire marshal's office has concluded that the explosion in an empty storage tank in Thomaston last week was caused by a combination of unburned particles in the air, heat and oxygen. The explosion at Dragon Cement Products on Wednesday, Dec. 23 was accidental, said Sgt. Ken Grimes of the state fire marshal's office. He did not anticipate any charges being filed in the case. The elevated storage tank was in the process of being demolished at the time. It had been empty for years, Grimes said. Sparks from a cutting torch ignited a 10 foot by 10 foot debris pile that included insulation and styrofoam before the explosion. Hot gases from the fire entered through vents in the tank and filled it before the particles in the thick smoke ignited. No one was injured.  
<http://www.wmtw.com/news/22073668/detail.html>

## **USA, AZ, PHOENIX**

**DECEMBER 31 2009.**

### **FRAUD, WASTE RAMPANT AT ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, PART THREE**

#### **ADOT COVERS UP 10,000 GALLON WASTE DUMP**

It's not unusual for ADOT employees to carpool to out of town meetings, but when three carpoolers happened onto a 10,000 gallon waste oil dump, created by ADOT, it changed their lives.

One afternoon, in February 2008, Arizona Department of Transportation employees Diane Schatz, Tom Steinberger and Mike Porter were returning to their Kingman office from a training program in Flagstaff. Like they had done several times before, they pulled their ADOT vehicle into the Seligman ADOT maintenance yard to get gasoline.

They chatted with other old hand ADOT employees who told them they had a story to tell. It was about a supervisor named Bruce Mejia who ordered them to dump thousands of gallons of waste oil on the side of Arizona highways. The crews were trying to get rid of soil, contaminated by years of trucks driving up to places and hosing off debris with diesel fuel. And sometimes, they disposed of thousands of gallons of fuel oil, all at once. The problem was reaching a boiling point and the discussion turned into a confessional.

In an Office of Inspector General (OIG) report, obtained by this reporter, is testimony by ADOT staffers like ten-year veteran Michael Henry, from the Kingman office, who said Mejia ordered him to dump two truckloads or 2,000 gallons. Other employees said their loads were closer to 5,000 gallons at a time. Henry told detectives that Mejia ordered them to empty two elevated 4,000 to 6,000 gallon tanks of waste oil into vehicles that could then dump the oil at ADOT's Seligman maintenance yard. That chore took two trucks, working for two days, transporting 800-900 gallons per truck trip.

They weren't particular where they dumped. Some employees testified they dumped in Ash Fork, Fort Rock, and an area near exit 121 off of Interstate 40 that leads to the Hualapai Indian Reservation. Investigators were told that ADOT staff dug a pit near exit 121 measuring 12 feet by 20 feet into which thousands of gallons of waste oil and fuel were dumped. One employee told investigators they had created a "La Brea Tar Pit" named after the Los Angeles site where, up through the ground came a bubblin' crude oil, claiming the lives of prehistoric animals.

But the ADOT crew began getting nervous, their antics now creating a mess where the oil "could flow off the  
561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568

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millings pile like a river needing a second containment pit,” one ADOT employee testified.

So, they moved it. Lock stock and barrels - Bruce Mejia and other supervisors ordering crews to bull doze down into the soil until no visible evidence of oil could be seen. Mejia’s plan was to later get a road grader to scrape the area top soil clean, and then allow environmental specialist to take core samples.

But before the ‘gang that couldn’t shoot straight’ committed the conspiracy, someone was on to them. Unknown individuals in unmarked state of Arizona cars pulled up at the dump site near I-40’s exit 121, erected barricades around the pit and left.

Enough of the evidence of the pit was removed to satisfy consultant engineers, hired by ADOT to check the site, because by the time they got there, there “was no visible staining of native soil,” according to SCS Engineers, a nationwide engineering company.

Mejia went ballistic. ADOT employees Gabriel Alvarado and Dell Dodge testified to detectives that Mejia ripped their t-shirts off their bodies. Another employee backed up the oppressive style behavior by stating employees had hot coffee thrown at them by Mejia. Alvarado claims they buried 10,000 gallons of oil in the Seligman pile alone. Dodge claimed Mejia called him “scum” on nearly a daily basis and ordered him to deliver some guard rails and posts to the private residence of John Cothrun, a retired Department of Public Safety (Arizona Highway Patrol) Sergeant. Dodge did not ask if they were paid for. In every case, the employees were threatened with being written up for insubordination if they didn’t follow orders.

Cothrun was interviewed by detectives about the guard rails and posts and insists that a construction company, working on Interstate 40 and State Route 89, gave them to him.

Alvarado was also ordered by Mejia to dump 7,000 gallons of magnesium chloride, a de-icing solution. Alvarado watched as his truck load “was flowing down the sides of the road.” Other ADOT employees reported seeing Mejia supervising a bull dozer operator disposing thousands of gallons of waste oil.

It’s no coincidence that an Environment Department investigation began shortly after the OIG investigation. In a complaint letter to ADOT, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) stated that ADOT was allegedly mixing and burying diesel fuel, solvent wash, and asphalt millings with soil, and that it could be a risk to public health.

Anonymous tips began rolling into ADEQ and the Director of ADOT, Victor Mendez, which included color and black and white photographs of dump sites. When asked about the pollution and alleged fraud, Mendez – now the head of the Federal Highway Administration – referred this reporter to ADOT. Some of the anonymous tips to both state agencies may have come from Schatz, Steinberger and Porter. At the very least, the three testified to OIG detectives.

“I couldn’t believe what I was hearing from my colleagues. I took a look myself and couldn’t believe what I was seeing,” said Schatz.

Most of the dumping occurred in 2007, including two 55-gallon drums of “unidentifiable sludge” that supervisors ordered their subordinates to dispose of.

Bruce Mejia was sent a letter by ADEQ in July 2008 stating the alleged piles of waste could pollute the waters of the United States pursuant to EPA regulations.

Mejia was challenged by his subordinates, who did not want to dump the oil, but Mejia eagerly described to detectives how he had done it 10-15 times a year and that ADOT’s environmental division knew about it. Even ADEQ suspects ADOT of conducting such practices for six years. Five detectives from the Office of Inspector General and at least three inspectors from ADEQ have been assigned to this case.

Testimony in the OIG report says ADOT’s Ransom Spurlock, of the Kingman office, ordered ADOT employees to continue or face insubordination charges. Tony Mascher, a former county sheriff and nine year employee of ADOT told detectives, “We dumped 8,000 gallons of oil between July and September of 2007.” Mascher also said another ADOT employee told him he was ordered to dump 5,000 gallons at another site.

The dumping was tacitly approved by the top man in Kingman-ADOT, Michael Kondelis, who told one employee (Dell Dodge) that the cleaning process “was not right and they shouldn’t be doing it, but they had a job to do and continue what they have been doing.” Dodge expressed concerns about getting into trouble for the dumping.

One material they were dumping is MC-250, a hazardous chemical which helps asphalt bind together. The toxic soup ADOT was brewing also included diesel fuel, waste pieces of asphalt, and other waste oils.

ADOT’s environmental staff has taken a very defensive posture amid the hail of allegations, telling detectives there “could be” an environmental issue, but strongly denying culpability in its formal responses to ADEQ. Ed Green, from ADOT’s environmental division admitted one pile of waste in Seligman was 320 feet long by 100 feet wide but denied it was 8,000 gallons. Green also told detectives, if 8,000 gallons were dumped, “all sorts of state and federal” rules had been violated.

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But it's not just an environmental concern; it's a financial concern as well. A tank full of waste oil has a value of \$9,000 to \$18,000 depending on its dilution ratio.

Clarence James, an ADOT worker in the Kingman office told detectives that he witnessed Mejia ripping the shirt off Alvarado, and that he was ordered to dispose of three 55-gallon mystery tanks that he dumped in the Seligman pit, and that he suspected Mejia of wrongdoing.

James told investigators he saw Mejia snooping around a double fatality auto accident scene, along a state highway, and later bragged about a new power tool and wood duck decoy he had found. ADOT policy declares it "theft" if someone "finds" something at an accident scene and does not turn it in.

According to experts, the toxic stew will eventually seep deep into the soil and cover up the actions of ADOT employees, simply by the laws of science and nature. And ADOT does not appear to be in any hurry. In ADOT's reply to ADEQ's complaint, Todd Williams, head of ADOT's environmental division said, "The allegations are without merit or foundation. Incidental use of diesel fuel (to wash trucks) does not create contaminated soils."

Williams also stated that ADOT had a best practices manual. But ADOT staffers' procedures for handling waste oil varies from office to office. Francis Perkins of ADOT's Holbrook District uses ZEP, instead of diesel fuel, for safety reasons, not environmental concerns.

Mike Kondelis of ADOT's Kingman District, claims he is unaware of an ADOT regulation prohibiting the use of diesel as a cleaning solution, but that he is aware of bio-degradable alternatives. He also admitted to investigators that a \$9,000 - \$18,000 expenditure for a tank of waste oil is "significant."

Mike Durnez, in ADOT's Winslow office, uses Bean E Doo to clean trucks, and was told for two years their office "would not be using diesel fuel to clean with."

Irv Van Enwyck of ADOT's Wickenburg office stated he does not believe anybody would need 20-25 gallons of diesel fuel to clean a truck part, and that he's never heard of Bean E Doo."

And in a follow up letter to ADOT, obtained by this reporter, Mindi Cross of ADEQ said, "ADOT does not have a facility plan to dispose of such waste and does not take measures to control storm water run-off."

Mejia admitted to investigators that he was involved in some dumpings, and a t-shirt tearing incident, but denied other allegations. In the end, investigators couldn't pin the tens of thousands of gallons of illegal dumpings on Mejia but found that Mejia "wasted and/or misused ADOT resources," committed theft of found property, and lied to investigators.

Mejia's boss, Kondelis, denies knowing about some of Mejia's dumpings, but stated Mejia should have used storage tanks for the disposal. Ed Green, DOT's environmental guy, signed a letter claiming "there was no improper disposal of a large amount of oil."

The Office of Inspector General closed its investigation. ADOT claims there was no environmental evidence to suggest that reporting to ADEQ or EPA was required. We may never know the exact amount of waste oil and chemicals dumped by ADOT employees. Figures vary. Testimony varies, and the oil has been hidden, spread out and is seeping. ADEQ's investigation continues.

Mejia was asked to retire, and did. The other ADOT employees still work there.

ADOT Director John Halikowski, Governor Jan Brewer, former Governor Napolitano, former Director of ADOT – Victor Mendez, and other state of Arizona legislators and employees were offered an opportunity to comment on this investigative report, but they declined.

<http://www.examiner.com/x-26090-Phoenix-Headlines-Examiner~y2009m12d30-Fraud-waste-rampant-at-Arizona-Department-of-Transportation-Part-Three>

## USA, TX, AUSTIN

**JANUARY 3 2010.**

### **OIL TANK FIRE BURNS 2,000 BARRELS OF OIL NEAR LULING**

*Russell Wilde*

Firefighters responded to an oil tank fire on Salt Flat Road, also known as County Road 128, near Luling.

The fire is located in an oil tank field. No homes are located nearby.

The fire reportedly started at about 8 a.m. with two 500-barrel tanks. When firefighters attempted to put out the fire, they found it too quick and dangerous to handle.

"We had it almost out, and then it flared back up on us," Luling Fire Department Captain Kirby Crowell said.

"When it flared back up, we decided to go ahead and back up, it's too dangerous to continue."

The flame then spread to two more 500-barrel tanks. Firefighters said about 2,000 barrels of crude oil burned.

"Lots of black smoke and lots of fire," Crowell said.

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The Caldwell County Sheriff's Office responded to the fire after the Luling Fire Department requested aid. The Austin Fire Department also dispatched to the scene with a truck carrying foam to try to extinguish the fire, as water was not an effective solution.

Fires like Saturday's are not new to the Luling area. It is part of life, living near the oil fields.

"It's usually during lightning strikes or that type of thing, but any kind of static electricity or something happening on the tank can cause this," Crowell said.

Investigators said it's too early to say what caused this fire.

Francisco Castillo heard the sirens and went to see what happened.

"I look over here and there was a lot of smoke," he said.

Castillo has worked in Luling's oil fields, and knows what large plumes of black smoke means.

"I thought it was probably one of our tanks, our oil tanks, so I called my brothers and 'Let's go check it out'," Castillo said.

The fire wasn't at his tanks, but what he found were firefighters from several agencies working to get a big oil tank fire under control.

"I feel bad for the owners of the lease," Castillo said.

Neighbors said the tank battery, which is now a total loss, was just a few months old.

The smoke could be seen from as far away as San Marcos and Mustang Ridge.

Information about the cause of the fire is not available at this time.

[http://www.news8austin.com/content/your\\_news/default.asp?ArID=262838](http://www.news8austin.com/content/your_news/default.asp?ArID=262838)

## **USA, WA, LONGVIEW**

**JANUARY 3 2010.**

### **LONGVIEW TEEN BADLY BURNED WHILE SIPHONING GAS**

*Erik Olson*

A 17-year-old Longview boy suffered serious burns on his chest and abdomen early Friday morning after he lit a cigarette while attempting to siphon gasoline from a car in the Beacon Hill area, according to police and firefighters. The teen's name was not released, suffered first- and second-degree burns over 30 percent of his body and was transported to St. John Medical Center, Cowlitz 2 Fire and Rescue lieutenant Jason Sanders said. The burns extended to his pelvis, hands and feet, Sanders said. The Cowlitz County Sheriff's Office will forward the case to the prosecutor's office to determine whether the boy will face charges for attempted theft, Sgt. Troy Brightbill said. The incident happened in the 100 block of Alpha Road Drive. The teen apparently lives in the area and was attempting to siphon gasoline from a neighbor's vehicle for a friend's car, Sanders said. The boy was with a group of friends, who made the emergency call, he said. The vehicle sustained minor damage when the gasoline fumes ignited, he said. "The fumes from the gas and the cigarette decided to catch fire," Sanders said. The incident highlights the danger of having an open flame near gasoline, Sanders said. "Any time you're working around fuel or gasoline, do not light a match or smoke."

[http://www.tdn.com/news/article\\_689b4ed6-f76d-11de-a4eb-001cc4c002e0.html](http://www.tdn.com/news/article_689b4ed6-f76d-11de-a4eb-001cc4c002e0.html)

## **USA, TX, HOUSTON**

**JANUARY 5 2010.**

### **HOUSTON COMPANY FACES \$1.47M FINE FOLLOWING FATAL EXPLOSION**

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) on January 4 issued CES Environmental Services Inc. willful and serious citations after an investigation into a fatal explosion at the company's Griggs Road facility in Houston. Proposed penalties total \$1,477,500.

In July 2009, an employee cleaning a tank was killed in an explosion when an altered piece of equipment ignited flammable vapors inside the tank. The fatality was the third death in less than a year at this employer's facilities; two hydrogen sulfide exposure-related deaths at a related facility, Port Arthur Chemical and Environmental Services LLC (PACES), occurred in December 2008 and April 2009.

"Proper precaution prevents deaths," said Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. "Employers should take steps to eliminate hazards and provide a safe working environment for their workers. That is the law."

Based on the most recent investigation, OSHA has issued 15 willful citations with proposed penalties totaling \$1,050,000, alleging that 15 pieces of electrical equipment were unsafe to use in the tank wash area due to the presence of flammable and combustible vapors. Two additional willful citations with proposed penalties totaling \$125,000 have been issued. One alleges that CES failed to ventilate tanks in which employees were working, exposing the workers to toxic atmospheric hazards. The other alleges that CES stored flammable and reactive chemicals together,

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which posed fire and explosion hazards.

In addition, OSHA has issued 54 serious violations with proposed penalties totaling \$302,500. These include allegations that CES failed to implement all aspects of the process safety management standard; provide proper respiratory protection, confined space rescue equipment and adequate fall protection; properly install and maintain boiler equipment; implement an emergency response plan, and adequate energy control procedures; train powered industrial truck operators; guard and to anchor machinery adequately; store compressed gas cylinders safely; and label hazardous chemicals.

A willful citation is characterized by an employer's intentional disregard of the standards or plain indifference to employee safety and health. A violation is characterized as serious when death or serious physical harm could result if an accident were to occur as the result of a hazard about which the employer knew or should have known.

OSHA previously cited PACES following the December 18, 2008, and the April 14, 2009, fatalities and proposed penalties of \$16,600 and \$207,800, respectively. Both of those fatalities occurred in Port Arthur, Texas. Those citations were contested and are being litigated before the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission. CES and PACES together employ 155 workers. CES has 15 business days from receipt of the latest citations to comply, request an informal conference with OSHA's area director or contest the findings before the independent review commission.

<http://www.reliableplant.com/article.aspx?articleid=22096&pagetitle=Houston+company+faces+%241.47M+fine+following+fatal+explosion>

## UK, CHESHIRE

**JANUARY 5 2010.**

### **SHELL - DAD-OF-THREE STEPHEN RIZZOTTI, 40, OF NORTON CROSS, SUFFERED A BROKEN BACK, TWO BROKEN LEGS AND BROKEN PELVIS**

Three companies were fined a total of £283,332 today after a Runcorn man was paralysed from the waist down while working at a Shell oil refinery in Cheshire.

The Health and Safety Executive prosecuted three companies after an incident at the Stanlow Manufacturing Complex near Ellesmere Port.

Shell UK Oil Products Ltd, Dalprop Ltd (formerly S.G. Blair and Co. Ltd) and Hertel UK Ltd were fined today at Warrington Crown Court.

HSE Inspector Alan Graham said: "This incident was totally avoidable and has had a devastating impact on Mr Rizzotti and his family.

"The scaffolding should have been constructed so that the lifting equipment was away from areas where people had to walk. The landing area should also have been suitably protected.

"This case clearly demonstrates why it's so important for companies to put the safety of their employees first."

Mr Rizzotti was working for S.G. Blair and Co. (now Dalprop Ltd) on a refurbishment project at the plant on February 9, 2007, when the incident happened.

The company was removing part of the concrete lining of the 'cracker' unit, where crude oil is turned into various chemical components.

Dad-of-three Mr Rizzotti suffered a broken back, two broken legs, a broken pelvis and other injuries when a container carrying 500kg of waste materials fell 30 feet on top of him. The court heard that the incident was caused by the materials being suspended above a walkway.

Mr Rizzotti led an active life before the incident, including running two junior football clubs.

But now the 42-year-old has to use a wheelchair and is rebuilding his life after being seriously injured at the oil refinery.

Mr Rizzotti joined SG Blair and Co as a labourer in 1991 and had progressed to become the Human Resources Manager. He said: "I can't remember anything about what happened. Half a dozen people had gone into the building before me but then, as I went in, the waste materials fell on top of me.

"It was touch and go at first but thanks to the doctors I survived. Now I have to get on with my life in a wheelchair. I have a simple message for all companies – safety has to be paramount."

Shell UK Oil Products and Dalprop pleaded guilty to contravening Regulation 8(1)(c) of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998. Shell was fined £116,666 and ordered to pay costs of £16,204, and Dalprop was fined £83,333 with costs of £11,115.

Hertel UK installed the scaffolding and platforms used for the project. This included the boards around the lifting equipment, which became dislodged causing the container carrying waste materials to fall.

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Hertel UK pleaded guilty to contravening Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £83,333 and ordered to pay costs of £16,204.

[http://www.runcornandwidnesworld.co.uk/news/4831938.Breaking\\_news\\_Three\\_companies\\_fined\\_283\\_332\\_after\\_Runcorn\\_man\\_is\\_paralysed\\_at\\_Shell\\_oil\\_refinery/](http://www.runcornandwidnesworld.co.uk/news/4831938.Breaking_news_Three_companies_fined_283_332_after_Runcorn_man_is_paralysed_at_Shell_oil_refinery/)

## **USA, TX, DEER PARK**

**JANUARY 10 2010.**

### **STORAGE TANK OVERFLOWS AT SHELL FACILITY**

The cold weather is also causing problems for area petrochemical plants. Last night's freeze had some of the companies keeping close watch. There was a situation at Shell Deer Park facility. The company said there was never any danger to the surrounding community or the employees who were working at that particular site. Frigid temperatures overnight caused an equipment malfunction in a storage tank area which caused one storage tank to overflow. That tank contained about 250 gallons of a very corrosive material called liquid caustic, which is used in a variety of petrochemical processes. A Shell plant spokesperson told Eyewitness News that special preparations are made in advance of weather like this because they often expect some problems. "We follow our very detailed procedures and processes for preparing the plant first of all in advance of the freezing conditions. We protect the piping instrumentation and other critical equipment that we have on site," said Shell spokesperson Chris Bozman. "We have teams that work around the clock to monitor the situation and make sure we could quickly resolve any situation that comes up." The situation at the complex was resolved very quickly and with more frigid temperatures expected tonight, teams will be on standby to monitor those storage tanks in case there are any other problems.

<http://abclocal.go.com/ktrk/story?section=news/local&id=7209847>

## **USA, WV, CHARLESTON**

**JANUARY 12 2010.**

### **BAYER CITED FOR MIC TANK VIOLATIONS**

Ken Ward Jr.

Bayer CropScience has not properly maintained or tested the underground storage tank where it keeps roughly 200,000 pounds of methyl isocyanate, the deadly chemical that killed thousands of people in Bhopal, India, in 1984, state inspectors have alleged.

Department of Environmental Protection inspectors issued four citations to Bayer for alleged mismanagement of the MIC tank. Inspectors discovered the problem during a June 2009 inspection, and formal violation notices were issued in late September.

No fines have been issued, and DEP officials said last week they don't know if Bayer has fixed the problems.

Tom Dover, a Bayer spokesman, said in an e-mailed response that the company "is in discussions" with DEP and wanted to "emphasize that the integrity of the referenced tanks is not in question, nor is the safe storage of our materials."

But officials from the U.S. Chemical Safety Board, who reviewed the DEP violation notices at the Sunday Gazette-Mail's request, said the allegations concerned them.

"It doesn't give us a warm and fuzzy feeling," board Chairman John Bresland said Friday. "I would have thought if you were dealing with a tank containing methyl isocyanate, you would always want to have the best practices in place."

CSB investigators have been examining the Institute plant's operations in the wake of the August 2008 explosion and fire that killed two plant workers and forced thousands of Kanawha Valley residents to take shelter in their homes.

For years, the Institute facility has been the only one in the nation to store large quantities of MIC onsite.

Last April, congressional investigators concluded the explosion could have easily damaged a nearby MIC storage tank and triggered a disaster that would have been worse than Bhopal. CSB officials described the incident as "potentially a serious near miss, the results of which might have been catastrophic for workers, responders and the public."

In late August, as the one-year anniversary of the deadly explosion in Institute neared, Bayer announced it was cutting its MIC storage by about 80 percent. After the changes, Bayer hopes to keep its daily maximum MIC inventory below 50,000 pounds -- still far more than any other chemical plant in the nation.

<http://sundaygazettemail.com/News/201001090168>

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

**USA, TX, SANTA FE**

**JANUARY 12 2010.**

## **OIL STORAGE TANKS OVERFLOW; SPILL CONTAINED**

*Hayley Kappes*

Three crude oil storage tanks in the 6700 block of Avenue R just outside the city limits overflowed Sunday, but the spillage was contained within levee walls and did not pose environmental hazards, authorities said. A nearby resident noticed the tanks overflowing about 3:15 p.m. and called Houston-based Nordstrand Engineering Inc., which owns and manages the site, Ray Benoist, a Galveston County Sheriff's Office spokesman, said. The resident could not get through to the company, so he called Santa Fe Fire and Rescue. The sheriff's office, railroad commission and representatives from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality also responded, Santa Fe Fire and Rescue Chief C.T. —Tommy|| Anderson said. Officials got in touch with a representative from Nordstrand who shut off the pumps, Anderson said. About 400 to 500 gallons of crude oil overflowed into the containment levees but did not spill onto the ground, Garret Foskit, Galveston County nuisance abatement officer, said. Nordstrand workers still were vacuuming the oil at 6 p.m. and will investigate the cause of the system malfunction today, Foskit said. Nordstrand employees told officials the company lost power a couple days ago but didn't know if it was a factor in the tanks' overflow, Foskit said. Each tank can hold 400 barrels of crude oil, Benoist said. The well pumps about seven barrels of oil and 15 barrels of water a day, he said.

<http://www.galvnews.com/story.lasso?ewcd=f2168fa7c3836eb4>

**IRAN, KHUZESTAN**

**JANUARY 12 2010.**

## **FIRES IN IRAN'S MAROON FIELD BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL**

### **OIL SPILL IMPACT UNKNOWN**

According to a report by Mehr News Agency, the fires at Iran's Maroon oil field located in southwestern province of Khuzestan have been brought under control. On January 2nd, Iran's Oil Ministry reported an accidental release of oil and gas at the Maroon field, one of the largest in Iran with 500,000 barrels a day output. It is said that 50,000 barrels of oil spilled into Jarrahi River as a result of the incident.

According to ISNA, the fire was caused by the explosion of a pipe at a depth of 700 meters and the emergence of oil fountain as a result of it. But the report by Mehr states that the fires were done on the orders of oil ministry managers to prevent the oil and gas from spilling. Well number 104 which was involved in this incident produces 2000 barrels per day. Currently about 1500 barrels are burned to prevent the pollution of the area.

Initial reports from the incident indicated 50,000 barrels of oil spilled into the nearby Jarrahi river as a result of the incident. But There has been conflicting reports about the cause of the fires. Some officials deny any spill into the river, while others dispute the amount

Some blame the cause of the incident is blamed on the old age of Well number 104. This well has been in service for 35 years without being rebuilt. But the oil ministry officials deny this and instead blame the incident on geological issues.

<http://www.payvand.com/news/10/jan/1096.html>

**USA, AK, ADAK ISLAND**

**JANUARY 13 2010.**

## **OVERFILLING TANK BLAMED FOR DIESEL SPILL ON ADAK ISLAND**

### **UNDERGROUND TANK MAY HAVE OVERFLOWED.**

*Megan Holland*

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and the U.S. Coast Guard on Tuesday responded to an Adak Island diesel fuel spill that could be as much as 143,000 gallons.

The No. 2 diesel spilled from an underground storage tank, said DEC on-site coordinator Gary Folley. It happened as a tanker was offloading fuel Monday afternoon and may have occurred because the tank overflowed, he said.

Officials believe most of the fuel spilled on land around the tank farm. Visual estimates from the owners of the storage tank, Adak Petroleum, were that a small fraction -- about 1,000 gallons -- made it to the nearby small boat harbor.

Adak Petroleum is a subsidiary of Aleut Enterprises.

As soon as workers knew about the spill, they set up booms to try to contain it from leaking into nearby water

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sources, Folley said. They first noticed something was wrong when a diesel smell was detected in Sweeper Cove, he said.

The DEC said the fuel likely made it to the harbor and cove by escaping into a drainage system that collects water from around the tank farm and discharges it to a salmon creek that drains out to the cove.

By Tuesday, the spill appeared to have been stopped, the DEC report said. While cleanup began on the drainage system, no cleanup was undertaken in the cove because of "safety concerns associated with conducting night operations," the DEC report said.

Diesel fuel is a light refined petroleum. No oiled wildlife has been observed, the DEC report said, but a sheen has been seen on the south side of the boat harbor and at the mouth of another nearby creek.

The DEC, Coast Guard and a private cleanup company, Alaska Chadux, went to Adak with more oil response cleanup equipment on Tuesday.

The island, on the Aleutian Chain 1,300 miles southwest of Anchorage, is home to 180 people.

It was not clear what the fuel was being off-loaded for but the Aleut Enterprises Web site says it provides fuel at Adak for commercial fishing, marine cargo, private tourism and other boats and ships traveling through the North Pacific.

"Adak Petroleum is conducting a comprehensive investigation to identify and correct all procedural, equipment failure and inappropriate third-party action that may have caused or contributed to the discharge," according to an Adak Petroleum press release.

Adak's waters are home to migratory birds and some 300 sea otters, wildlife officials say.

Steve Delehanty, manager for the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, said the initial on-site reports from Sweeper Cove were that not many migratory birds, such as sea ducks, were around Tuesday. But he said refuge managers were just beginning to understand the scale and scope of the problem.

Sweeper Cove, along with all the waters around the island, is considered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to be "critical habitat" for the southwestern sea otter, an animal susceptible to the dangers of an oil spill and protected under the Endangered Species Act. There are an estimated 40,000 sea otters left in Southwest Alaska.

The critical habitat designation for the sea otters applies from the end of the Aleutian Islands to lower Cook Inlet and includes the Kodiak Archipelago.

Sweeper Cove has just a couple of sea otters, according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife biologist Verena Gill. Surveys from the past decade have counted from zero to two sea otters in the cove, she said.

<http://www.adn.com/front/story/1090072.html>

## **USA, WA, GRAYS HARBOR**

**JANUARY 13 2010.**

### **INVESTIGATORS FIND CAUSE OF BIODIESEL PLANT EXPLOSION**

*John Davis*

Company investigators say they have found the cause of the explosion last month at the Imperium Renewables biodiesel plant near Grays Harbor, Washington state. The DailyWorld.com reports a 10,000-gallon glycerin neutralization tank became over-pressurized to the point of an explosion when sulfuric acid caused an unexpected exothermic reaction: "Personnel were unaware of the potential for such a reaction," spokesman John Williams wrote in the release, "and the processing equipment itself was not designed with physical or mechanical safeguards to prevent an oversupply of sulfuric acid." Imperium CEO John Plaza said in the release the company is planning to install new mechanical safeguards to prevent a similar increase in the acid ratio from reacting in the future. "We are taking steps to make sure this cannot, and does not, ever happen again," he said. Company officials say they are working on getting the plant back online but didn't give a timeline as to when the repairs would be complete.

<http://domesticfuel.com/2010/01/11/investigators-find-cause-of-biodiesel-plant-explosion/>

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

**USA, GA, DEKALB COUNTY, TUCKER**

**JANUARY 16 2010.**

## **FATHER OF 5 DIES IN MANHOLE EXPLOSION**

Police have reopened the streets around a DeKalb County gas station where an explosion Friday afternoon killed a 51-year-old father of five.

Though traffic was flowing Saturday morning, investigators will be back to try to determine what caused the explosion that killed Larry Dobbs of Newnan and hurt another man.

Dobbs was working on fuel lines in a manhole at the time of the explosion that was so powerful it blew off the metal lids of about a dozen nearby manholes.

The incident happened just before 5 p.m. at a vacant BP gas station near the intersection of Hugh Howell Road and Mountain Industrial Boulevard in Tucker, according to Officer Mekka Parish with DeKalb police.

Dobbs was part of a crew that included one of his brothers, Alan, according to a sister, Patsy Hayes of Oneida, Tenn. The crew was working on converting fuel lines, and Larry Dobbs was the only one underground at the time of the blast, she said.

"He wasn't sure it was Larry at first," Hayes said Friday evening.

Larry Dobbs died instantly, according to police.

Capt. Eric Jackson with the DeKalb County fire department said a vapor line is believed to be the cause of the explosion. The incident is still under investigation.

"We really don't know what happened," Hayes said.

Another person was transported to a hospital with burns. Two other workers were not injured, Parish said. Local businesses were temporarily evacuated as fire crews worked to make sure the area was safe.

Larry Dobbs, one of seven children, had done this type of work all of his life, Hayes said. If it came to making repairs at a gas station, he had probably done it.

"I worried a lot," Hayes said.

About a year ago, her brother suffered a serious head injury following an auto accident. He required rehabilitation before he was able to return to work, Hayes said.

In addition to his children and siblings, Larry Hobbs is survived by his wife, Theresa Miceli.

"We're still in shock," Hayes said. "He was so loved by all and will be greatly missed."

<http://www.ajc.com/news/dekalb/father-of-5father-of-5-dies-276374.html>

**CANADA, ONT, STIRLING**

**JANUARY 21 2010.**

## **MOE OFFICIALS ON SCENE OF DIESEL FUEL SPILL**

*Megan Abraham*

The Ministry of the Environment is still on site cleaning up after diesel fuel leaked into Rawdon Creek early Monday morning. Diesel fuel was accidentally pumped out onto the ground from a tank onsite at the Stirling Creamery around 4:45 a.m. Monday. Fuel ran down the sloped parking lot and into the creek, located adjacent to the creamery on East Front Street. According to Michel Finn, communications officer for the Ministry of the Environment, it's estimated that 800 to 1,000 litres of diesel fuel leaked into the creek. Since Monday morning, he said, two teams from the ministry have been attending to the spill, and water surface experts, Scott Integrated Environmental Services, has been using tanker trucks with hoses, along with absorbent pads, to remove fuel from the surface water. It's not yet known how long the ministry will be on site, Finn said. "They're there to ensure the company is taking the appropriate actions, and to give guidance," Finn said. "They will continue to be in contact until the situation is resolved." Finn added that when spills occur it's not only the quantity of fuel that determines the severity of the spill, but also the environmental conditions. "Everything has to be put into perspective," he said. "The good news is that they haven't seen any signs of dead fish, and that's encouraging." According to a press release from the municipality, four municipal drinking wells, located south of Elizabeth Street, were tested Monday afternoon, and it was determined that "impacts to the municipal drinking water system are not anticipated." Stirling Creamery general manager, Bill West, said the business is "taking full responsibility" for the spill. "Every effort is being made to ensure a quick and complete resolution to this situation," he said in a press release.

<http://www.intelligencer.ca/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=2266549>

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

**USA, OK, CUSHING**

**JANUARY 22 2010.**

**BLUEKNIGHT OIL TANK CATCHES FIRE IN STORM**

*Rod Walton*

An oil storage tank owned by Blueknight Energy Partners LP caught fire Wednesday night after a lightning strike, according to reports. The 55,000-barrel tank burned for several hours at the Cushing hub, a delivery point for benchmark West Texas Intermediate Crude. Blueknight is the former SemGroup Energy Partners, a onetime subsidiary of SemGroup Corp., which emerged from bankruptcy last year. Blueknight spokesman Brent Gooden said Thursday the company did not know yet how many barrels of oil burned in the fire. No one was injured in the strike or the blaze. —We commend the Cushing, Oklahoma fire department for their efforts in putting out the tank fire last night,|| Gooden said in a statement. —We will conduct an internal assessment to determine the extent of the damage to the tank, which appears to have been limited to the seal encircling the top of the tank.|| Blueknight has about 6.7 million barrels of storage capacity at the Cushing hub. The tank was being leased by Calgary-based Nexen Inc. and contained oil from a combination of sources, including the Rocky Mountains, according to Bloomberg.

[http://www.tulsaworld.com/business/article.aspx?subjectid=49&articleid=20100121\\_298\\_0\\_CUSHIN511168](http://www.tulsaworld.com/business/article.aspx?subjectid=49&articleid=20100121_298_0_CUSHIN511168)