

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

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<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DangerousGoods/>

MEXICO, TAMAULIPAS, REYNOSA

MARCH 24 2013.

ANOTHER REFINERY EXPLOSION REPORTED IN CD. MADERO TAMAULIPAS

This afternoon a major explosion was reported in a refinery belonging to the Mexican national oil company PEMEX in Cd. Madero Tamaulipas.

Cd. Madero is in southern Tamaulipas state close to Tampico on the Gulf of Mexico.

The explosion occurred around 14:30 this afternoon causing a major mobilization of emergency rescue personnel, firefighters and Army units which had the facility evacuated within half an hour of the explosion and the grass fires in the perimeter pastures extinguished shortly thereafter.

No injuries have been reported so far by officials on the scene despite the large concentration of ambulances still waiting.

Workers from the plant via social networks are reporting that temperatures in Tank #3 in the coke processing area of the plant got above 400c causing the explosion but again, officials are not talking.

More on this breaking story as it becomes available and if it contains anything of special interest.

<http://mexicotrucker.com/another-refinery-explosion-reported-in-cd-madero-tamaulipas>

USA, WI, HUDSON, MARCH 25 2013. HUDSON GOLF COURSE WORKER DIES AFTER DRUM EXPLOSION

Hudson police say a golf course worker may have been lying on the floor in a pool of his own blood for several hours before he was found Friday afternoon. 35 year old Chad Wang was hurt when the sealed 55-gallon drum he was working on exploded at the Hudson Golf Course. Wang was using an acetylene torch at the time. The explosion caused the lid on that drum to shoot up and hit him in the head, causing severe injuries. A UPS driver found the worker from Spring Valley, Minnesota, semi-conscious.

<http://wtaq.com/news/articles/2013/mar/24/hudson-golf-course-worker-found-dead-after-explosion/>

USA, FLA, ST. PETERSBURG

MARCH 29 2013.

MAN FALLS TO HIS DEATH INSIDE AN EMPTY TANK AT NORTHWEST WATER TREATMENT FACILITY

Alison Morrow

St. Petersburg Fire Rescue is investigating a deadly fall at the Northwest Water Treatment Facility.

According to SPFR, a 52-year-old man fell about 30 feet into an empty tank at the facility located on 26th Ave. N and 75th Street around 11:15 a.m.

The victim died as a result of the fall.

SPFR Lt. Joel Granata told ABC Action News that the man was a subcontractor performing maintenance work on the walls of the tank, which can hold five million gallons of water.

"Some of the workers with him realized that he actually fell off the scissors jack platform," explained Lt. Granata. "When we got here, the victim was at the bottom of the tank. He'd fallen about 30 feet."

A handful of other crew members were standing on the base of the tank when he fell. They tried to revive him using CPR.

"But due to the severity of his injuries, it was trauma that was unsurvivable," Lt. Granata said.

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Officials say the man, who worked for Spectum Contracting in Naples, was not wearing a safety harness. The incident is now under an OSHA investigation.

http://www.abcactionnews.com/dpp/news/region_pinellas/man-falls-to-his-death-inside-an-empty-tank-at-northwest-water-treatment-facility#ixzz2QGVWuafK

USA, CA, CAMARILLO

MARCH 30 2013.

GAS STATION PAYS FOR IMPROPER PUMP LINES, UNDERGROUND TANKS

The district attorney's office recently announced the settlement of a civil environmental prosecution case against 7-Eleven which alleged the company violated underground storage tank laws and engaged in unfair business practices. On May 12, 2008, inspectors for the annual UST monitoring system certification at the 7-Eleven service station in Camarillo observed that tubing leading to sensors that monitor sumps had been tampered with, preventing the sensor from operating properly and disabling the automatic leak detection system. At the time, 7-Eleven was under a 2004 statewide injunction for failure to comply with certain UST laws, including tampering. Under the terms of the final judgment, which was entered without admission of liability, 7-Eleven agreed to remedy violations and comply with environmental laws. In addition, the company agreed to pay \$266,684 in civil penalties and investigative costs. Prosecutors noted that 7-Eleven fully cooperated in the investigation and negotiations leading to the settlement.

http://www.thecamarilloacorn.com/news/2013-03-29/Community/Gas_station_pays_for_improper_pump_lines_undergrou.html

MOGADISHU, HAMARWEYNE

MARCH 30 2013.

MOGADISHU PETROL STATION OFFERS MOTORISTS ALTERNATIVE TO JERRY CANS

Abdi Moalim

Mogadishu motorists no longer need to rely solely on roadside vendors selling dirty petrol in jerry cans to fill up their cars, trucks and motorbikes.

For the first time in 22 years, motorists in the Somali capital can fuel up at a newly refurbished petrol station equipped with pumps dispensing high quality fuel.

The SOPICO station in Mogadishu's Hamarweyne neighbourhood opened on March 7th. It is the first of eight petrol stations now slated for revival. Pumps at these stations stopped working with the fall of the central government in 1991.

A second station, the Benadir Petroleum Company, will open soon in Mogadishu's Abdiqiz District after undergoing testing.

"The last time I filled my vehicle at a petrol station in Mogadishu was 22 years ago, before the collapse of the government," said Mohamed Addow Qalinle, 55, who queued up at SOPICO to fill up his vehicle. "Therefore, I am very happy today that I can access refined fuel."

Qalinle said the re-emergence of a functioning petrol station in Mogadishu is a "treasured victory", while bus driver Nuur Alasow Oorfane was so excited about the new petrol station that he likened it to being "as happy as when I got my first child".

"This is because we have suffered too much from contact with unrefined petrol," Oorfane told Sabahi, referring to the below-standard and often contaminated petrol sold in jerry cans by roadside vendors. At SOPICO, Oorfane pays \$1.20 per litre -- the same price he used to pay for jerry can petrol.

Engine breakdowns and other problems caused by poor-grade petrol has been a long-time headache for Somali motorists like Dahir Warsame, who said he wants to see the roadside petrol hawkers pack up shop for good.

"The vendors [by the streets] do not store the fuel in clean containers while dust and other dirt find their way into the fuel," said Warsame, a mechanic and dealer of imported vehicles. "This kind of fuel destroys the vehicles' engines while unhealthy fumes are released into the air."

"All this leads to waste of resources. Motorists also waste a lot of time waiting for vendors to fill their vehicles with fuel using small containers," he told Sabahi. "All these challenges are addressed by the service stations retailing refined fuel."

Enterprising Somalis

For the new petrol stations, motorists can thank some enterprising Somalis who are testing the local business climate and taking advantage of improved security in Mogadishu and high demand for petrol.

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Mohamed Omar, a trader who had lived in the Netherlands, has returned home to Somalia, where he now works as the manager at SOPICO.

"[The petrol station] is still in its initial stages and many people have yet to adapt to the availability of clean petrol," he said. "Besides that, we have received a lot of acceptance and high demand, and we strive to offer our customers petrol that meets internationally acclaimed fuel standards. This is an option many motorists never had before, and we offer other products and services that motorists may need."

The Somali government is providing licenses to investors who want to refurbish the petrol stations, which are located on state-owned land, and charging rent for the use of the property.

"The government does not own any shares in the business, therefore, this is a private enterprise," Omar said. "We also use privately owned warehouses that we use independently to store the fuel we import." Peace activist Halimo Ga'ayte, 35, said the resurgence of the city's petrol stations shows how far security in Mogadishu has improved.

"In the old days, investors used to invest their resources in foreign countries for fear of conflict [in Somalia], but if they trust their home country now, then that is victory and progress," Ga'ayte told Sabahi.

More petrol stations coming

To pump new life into the petrol stations' recovery, the Benadir regional administration has granted licences to eight entrepreneurs, administration spokesperson Mohamed Yusuf Osman told Sabahi.

In addition to the two petrol stations already in the city, Osman said six others "will be operational very soon".

"We do not charge the entrepreneurs any taxes at the moment as we have prioritised the availability of fuel," he said. "For that reason, we have permitted entrepreneurs to invest in the government-owned fuel service outlets."

Deeqa Hassan, a mother of eight who sells fuel at the KM 5 junction, said she was worried the new petrol stations will put her out of work and is now searching for a new source of income.

"The service stations are going to push us out of business because our customers will [eventually] shift to petrol stations retailing clean fuel," she said, urging the government to help street vendors transition to other business ventures.

Osman suggested that roadside fuel vendors pool their resources and obtain one of the licenses for opening a petrol station.

http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2013/03/29/feature-01

USA, TX, MOUNTRAIL

APRIL 1 2013.

FATAL OIL EXPLOSION

A Burlington man is dead after an explosion, yesterday, at oil truck facility in Ross. Now there's a growing concern about the safety of oil workers. At around 3:00 Wednesday afternoon, emergency crews received a call of an explosion at the Plain Trucking yard northwest of Ross.

"After our initial investigation, we found there were two young gentlemen working on the tanker truck," explains Mountrail County Sheriff Ken Halvorson.

When the explosion happened, Trevor Davis, 19, of Burlington was ejected from the roof of the building and pronounced dead at the scene.

Halvorson said, "I think there was a lot of shock of it happening with him knowing these gentlemen and something like that occurring."

These types of accidents are becoming a big problem.

Halvorson said, "Yes, we are getting more and more of these accidents in the oil field and they are getting more serious all the time. Basically, in two weeks, this will be the second person that we've had that has perished."

For Halvorson, the dangers of working in the oil field are all too familiar.

"You go to work out in the oil field, and I did work out in the oil field when I got out of college for a period of time, you have to be on your toes all the time.

While oil companies are investing more time in training and safety since Halvorson's days out in the oil patch, he says accidents can still happen. "There isn't a second time or a second chance a lot of times. You got one goal and that is it."

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Davis's body was transported to the North Dakota Forensic Examiner's Office in Bismarck for autopsy. The cause of the incident is still under investigation.

http://www.kfyrtv.com/News_Stories.asp?news=62920

USA, MA, CHARLTON

APRIL 1 2013.

WELDING CO. OWNER FACES FINES, HOUSE ARREST FOR DIESEL SPILL >> PLEA DEAL REQUIRES PUBLIC APOLOGY

The owner of a Charlton welding company could face a \$75,000 fine and be ordered to issue a public apology in a newspaper after he pleaded guilty last year to a misdemeanor violation of the Clean Water Act.

In June 2010 more than 3,000 gallons of diesel fuel spilled into wetlands near Charlton Welding & Repair Inc. at 11 Griffin Road in Charlton, run by Larry McKissick II, 43. Mr. McKissick was called to his business then and told there was a smell of diesel fuel. Valves on a storage tank were open and roughly 3,200 gallons of diesel fuel had been released from the tank, federal court records show.

Authorities said Mr. McKissick did not notify state, local or emergency response officials and instead began to wash off his property. Later that day residents in a condominium complex about a quarter-mile downstream from the business called Charlton police and fire departments to report a fuel smell.

Fire officials found fuel in the wetlands and traced the discharge to Mr. McKissick's property, federal records show. Firefighters notified the state Department of Environmental Protection about the fuel and it was discovered that the ground, wetlands and a half-mile of the Cady Brook had been contaminated.

The cleanup took more than six months and cost the state Department of Environmental Protection roughly \$683,000. Mr. McKissick was charged in federal court with violating the federal water pollution control act — negligent discharge of oil. In mid-2010 the state fire marshal cited Mr. McKissick for 13 fire code violations relating to the oil spill. The state also turned over the remaining cleanup work to Mr. McKissick.

A sentencing hearing in federal court is scheduled for Thursday, but a plea agreement has been reached that includes a \$75,000 fine. If the plea agreement is accepted, Mr. McKissick would be placed on probation for a year and serve four months of home detention.

Paperwork filed by his attorney also states he would be ordered to have publicized — at his own expense — a public apology in a newspaper. That would have to come within two weeks of sentencing.

After the spill the state DEP ordered Mr. McKissick to hire a licensed professional to clean the contaminant from his property and test private wells in the area.

Fire officials also said Mr. McKissick did not have the permit to house a diesel fuel tanker.

Mr. McKissick's lawyer contends in paperwork that his client took responsibility for his actions once contacted by Charlton authorities. Mr. McKissick also had no knowledge of how much diesel fuel was spilled after estimates were made later.

<http://www.telegram.com/article/20130401/NEWS/104019945/1003/NEWS03>

USA, MI, LANSING

APRIL 5 2013.

UTILITY: MOST OF OIL SPILLED IN LANSING CLEANED UP

A utility has cleaned up most of the about 300 to 500 gallons of hydraulic fluid that spilled from a Lansing power plant and left a sheen on the Grand River, officials said.

Lansing Board of Water and Light's General Manager Peter Lark expects oil-absorbent booms — inflated buoys with pads to absorb the fluid — to be in place at least through the weekend, the Lansing State Journal reported.

"We are committed to cleaning up all the oil," Lark said. "If anybody can find any oil on that river, we are going to clean it up. If there are any pockets of oil that emanated from our plant, we are responsible for them."

A vacuum truck was used Wednesday to suck up the light, lubricant oil from the water, MLive.com reported.

The spill started Sunday night and was blamed on a gasket failure at the utility's Eckert Power Plant near downtown. Officials say crews began working immediately to clean up the leak but realized early Monday that oil was escaping a containment area.

Booms have been in place since Monday.

George Stojic, who heads the Lansing Board of Water and Light's environmental department, said the utility's environmental response team followed its emergency action plans after the spill. Still, Stojic said the accident was unacceptable.

"You don't want to see these spills," he said. "This stuff doesn't belong in the river."

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The utility and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality are investigating spill, and the MDEQ will assess the potential environmental impact.

"BWL appeared to have gotten in front of this thing very quickly," MDEQ spokesman Brad Wurfel. "They're doing everything they're supposed to be doing right now."

Oil spills into Michigan waterways have received increased attention since July 2010, when more than 800,000 gallons spewed into the Kalamazoo River and a tributary creek after the rupture of an underground pipeline near Marshall in southwestern Michigan.

Cleanup continues following that spill from Enbridge Inc.'s pipeline. In that case, oil flowed about 35 miles before it was contained.

<http://www.hollandsentinel.com/news/x898159816/Utility-Most-of-oil-spilled-in-Lansing-cleaned-up>

USA, ARK, MAYFLOWER

APRIL 5 2013.

EXXON PLAYING 'DIVIDE AND CONQUER' IN 'WALKING DEAD'-LIKE OIL SPILL TOWN

The Mayflower, Arkansas oil spill continues to be the source of questions about the long-term health, environmental and financial consequences for residents in a town the state's attorney general described as a scene out of 'The Walking Dead.'

After thousands of barrels of crude oil spilled from ExxonMobil's Pegasus pipeline over Easter weekend in the small Arkansas town, residents who were forced to evacuate from the 22 affected households continue to wonder what will become of their neighborhood and their lives.

While many are still unsure when they will one day be able to come home, questions about the energy giant's cleanup and compensation efforts have left both local residents and state officials less than satisfied.

"ExxonMobil is paying for the cleanup and will honor all valid claims. Reports to the contrary are inaccurate," said ExxonMobil in a statement.

Arkansas Attorney General Dustin McDaniel, who spoke of litigation as a "certainty," derided attempts by ExxonMobil representatives to manage his visit to the site.

"I explained to them I'm not here for a tour and I'm not getting in a van. We're here on behalf of the State of Arkansas as the state's lawyer, a constitutional officer empowered by the General Assembly to enforce our laws, and we're here to conduct an investigation, not take a tour," the Log Cabin Democrat cites him as saying on Wednesday.

"I didn't appreciate how we were treated, so I can only imagine how some of the homeowners must have felt."

McDaniel said he had issued a subpoena for documents, data and other evidence from ExxonMobil pertaining to the ruptured pipeline, setting an April 10 deadline for the oil and gas conglomerate to produce the requested evidence.

Speaking of potential reductions of property value in wake of the spill, McDaniel said that monetary losses resulting from those attempting to sell their houses "should not fall on the shoulders of homeowners."

McDaniel characterized the affected area as something out of the post-apocalyptic TV series 'The Walking Dead,' where "people in Hazmat suits" scoured the otherwise abandoned streets.

The attorney general estimated that some 600 responders were currently on the ground, not counting those who were offering assistance off site.

He further assessed that for a relatively small spill, the cleanup is "just not going great."

"I hope they realize for the homeowners in this area, it is not small. It is catastrophic. For those who fear for their drinking water, it is not great," the attorney general continued.

In an interview with RT, McDaniel said he has "more questions than answers after having visited with [Exxon] executives and seeing the site. They haven't told me any kind of cause that they have ascertained at this point."

Even Republican lawmaker Tim Griffin also spoke of the palpable environmental impact the spill had had.

Griffin, who complained of suffering from headaches after "limited exposure" during his visit to the site on Wednesday, said both staffers and local schoolchildren had experienced nausea from the fumes. He however added that based on reports from officials, air quality checks in the neighborhood tested "negative for dangerous substances."

"I have confidence if there's a problem we need to know about, the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and the Department of Transportation would tell us," the daily cites him as saying.

ExxonMobil paints a different image on its Twitter feed, stating its cleanup teams are "working around the clock" in Mayflower.

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Muddying the compensation waters

While McDaniel says ExxonMobil's legal office has thus far responded in good faith to his requests, residents feel that the oil conglomerate is being evasive about compensation details.

Responding to a written request from RT, Exxon media relations manager Alan Jeffers told RT that teams are working directly with residents of Mayflower and are "paying all valid claims relating to the spill and providing interim housing for people from the homes which the city of Mayflower recommended be evacuated following Friday's spill."

However, resident Chris Harrell posted to his Twitter after meeting with ExxonMobil that claims would only be dealt with individually and following the completion of the cleanup.

"The above statement was what I was told by the person at the Exxon claims center," Harrell told RT via email. "Granted, they are covering some out of pocket expenses in regards to room and board but no time line is being given to address compensation for long term effects on residents. I suppose Exxon gets to determine what a 'valid claim' really is."

He had previously said that ExxonMobil had given no assurances as to when the cleanup would be finished.

Divide & Conquer

For the company's part, Griffin, the local GOP legislator, said it would be a matter of days, not weeks before residents from the 22 households forced to evacuate would be allowed to return.

He said the responders were currently removing soil saturated with crude oil and doing other landscape work so that people would be able to return home.

During a closed, invite-only meeting held by Exxon on Tuesday night, Harrell told residents in attendance that those living on the side of the street which was least affected could potentially be back by this coming weekend. However, he continued that "there was no solid timeline" for others, who may "have to be determined on a case-by-case basis."

Harrell said that during the meeting, which was closed to the press, "some tough questions were asked and all were sidestepped by Exxon officials and residents were continuously referred to a claims hotline."

"One neighbor told me there was a sense of a 'divide and conquer' mentality on the Exxon side. Officials continually stated that questions and claims would be handled individually on a case by case basis," Harrell continued.

After suffering several bouts of headaches and dizziness, Harrell expressed fears about the "longtime health impact on residents of the area, and particularly children."

"My 4-year-old daughter complained of a stomach ache yesterday at her preschool. It may have had no relation to the oil but it definitely raises concern."

The rupture

With ExxonMobil saying that some 10,000 barrels – that's 420,000 gallons – of oil had been recovered, the company estimates that between 3,500-5,000 barrels of the crude mixture known as "tar sands" were spilled following the rupture.

The Pegasus pipeline, which can carry 90,000 barrels of crude from Illinois to Texas per day, crosses 13 miles of the Lake Maumelle watershed. The watershed incidentally provides much of the water for the Arkansas state capital, Little Rock.

When the pipeline ruptured on Friday, it was carrying Canadian Wabasca Heavy crude, a bitumen oil originating in the Canadian province of Alberta.

And while environmentalists have classified tar sand oil as more hazardous than conventional crude, oil companies transporting it are actually exempt from a tax that doubles as dues to the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, which was established to force owners to pay for the containment, cleanup and damages resulting from a given spill.

"The Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund is funded by an 8-cent-per-barrel excise tax on domestically produced and imported crude oil and on imported refined products such as gasoline," David Turnbull, the Campaigns Director from Oil Change International told RT. "However, the IRS has classified tar sands as different from conventional oil, and thus the tax levied to fill the liability trust fund is not levied on tar sands crude."

Turnbull argues that the loophole should be closed, as it doesn't line up with the actual intent of the tax or the fund.

"Given how toxic and dangerous tar sands oil – or bitumen – is, it's entirely irrational that this oil would be exempt from being taxed in order to pay for the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund. As these sorts of heavy oils that are exempt from this tax continue to make up a larger percentage of oil transported in the US, it will only serve to stretch the fund even further, while putting families, communities and ecosystems at greater risk," he continued.

After the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced a temporary no-fly zone over the Arkansas oil spill on Monday, speculation abounded that the ban was an attempt to keep the media from fully assessing the impact of

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the spill.

The FAA further prompted fears ExxonMobil had been given a free hand in managing the situation by saying that “only relief aircraft operations under direction of Tom Suhrhoff” – who identified himself as an aviation adviser for ExxonMobil on his LinkedIn profile – were permitted in the area.

Speaking on the issue, McDaniel told RT that Exxon “did not do a very good job of explaining to the public or the press what was going in that circumstance.” He however stressed that he is “comfortable” that the FAA’s temporary flight restrictions are “fair and related to safety.”

<http://rt.com/usa/arkansas-spill-walking-dead-347/>

USA, TX, HOUSTON

APRIL 5 2013.

COAST GUARD: SHELL PIPELINE SPILLS OIL INTO HOUSTON AREA BAYOU

An estimated 50 barrels of oil spilled from a pipeline operated by a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell PLC into a waterway outside Houston, according to the U.S. Coast Guard. Shell clean-up crews were working to clear the crude out of Vince Bayou, a waterway that connects to the Houston Ship Channel, which leads into the Gulf of Mexico, said Coast Guard Petty Officer Steven Lehman. The spill was contained but the total amount of oil was still being verified, Officer Lehman said. “That’s a very early estimate--things can change,” Officer Lehman said. On April 3, about 700 barrels were found to have leaked from the West Colombia pipeline because of an unknown cause, with up to 60 of those barrels emerging in the bayou, Shell spokeswoman Kim Windon said. The pipeline had been shut down and isolated on March 29 after alarms alerted the company that oil may have leaked from the line.

http://www.rigzone.com/news/oil_gas/a/125587/Coast_Guard_Shell_Pipeline_Spills_Oil_Into_Houston_Area_Bayou

ENGLAND, HAMSHIRE

APRIL 5 2013.

VITACRESS FINED £5,000 FOR OIL SPILL

Europe’s largest organic watercress grower has been fined after oil spilled into the Bourne Rivulet.

Vitacress Salads, based in St Mary Bourne, admitted that between 200 and 600 litres of diesel spilled into the rivulet, overflowing into the River Test last May.

The company pleaded guilty to contravening the re-quirements of an environmental permit at Basingstoke Magistrates’ Court on March 28.

Peter Bilbrough, prosecuting on behalf of the Environment Agency (EA), told the court that the accident happened during a power cut at the farm.

A backup generator was used to keep the power supply to the fridges but while an employee was re-filling the generator with diesel he wandered off and only remembered he had left the generator filling after an hour and a half.

A film of oil covered 7km of the Bourne Rivulet and the River Test for several days, with the EA spending £15,000 on the clean up, which was reimbursed by Vitacress.

Mr Bilbrough told the court: “While there is no evidence of deaths among fish or invertebrate life the incident did impact significantly on fisheries downstream of the site, where several days of potential fishing were lost and jeopardised the good reputation of the river, where excellent water quality is of paramount importance.”

John Mitchell, defending, said that the company had compensated owners more than £7,000 for loss of fishing for the two days while oil was present on the water.

He said: “It’s unusual for Vitacress to find itself in this situation – it’s much more used to receiving environmental plaudits.”

Mr Mitchell told the court that the company took over the clean up operation from the Environment Agency and that there has been a review of the process for refilling the generator.

He said: “The senior management was absolutely aghast about what happened here.”

The court heard that Vitacress’ last conviction was 16 years ago when it was fined £6,000 for allowing processed water to enter the Bourne Rivulet.

Magistrates ordered Vitacress to pay a fine of £5,000, reduced from £7,500 for an early guilty plea and to pay costs of £3,785, along with a £15 victim surcharge.

Mr Gill, chairman of the bench, said: “The maximum fine would be £50,000 and having taken into account everything we feel this falls towards the bottom end of that.”

http://www.thisishampshire.net/news/10336029.Vitacress_fined_5_000_for_oil_spill/

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USA, MA, CHARLTON

APRIL 5 2013.

CHARLTON BUSINESS OWNER HIT WITH \$75K FINE FOR FUEL SPILL

Scott J. Croteau

In federal court Thursday in Boston, the owner of a Charlton welding company who failed to report a diesel fuel leak at his business that required an expensive cleanup by the state was fined \$75,000 and ordered to serve a year of probation.

The sentence given to 43-year-old Larry McKissick II in U.S. District Court came after he pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor violation late last year of the Clean Water Act.

The charge stemmed from a June 2010 diesel fuel leak from Mr. McKissick's business — Charlton Welding & Repair into the Cady Brook and nearby wetlands. Authorities estimated 3,200 gallons of diesel fuel spilled into the brook from a storage tank at the 11 Griffin Road business in Charlton.

"I apologize for my actions regarding this incident," Mr. McKissick said to U.S. District Court Magistrate Jennifer C. Boal. "Hopefully we can get through it and move on."

Mr. McKissick will serve 4 months of probation in home detention. He must have an apology for his actions published in a newspaper at his own expense.

Federal records state Mr. McKissick did not notify any authorities when he responded to the leak and hosed off his property with water. Residents from a nearby condominium complex had reported a smell to police and fire officials, who discovered the source of the odor and leak.

The cleanup took six months and cost the state Department of Environmental Protection more than \$680,000.

Mr. McKissick's lawyer, Martin E. Levin, said his client did not know the extent of the leak until much later and his client found the storage tank tampered with when he responded to the fuel smell at his business.

"This was an unfortunate incident," Mr. Levin said.

As part of probation Mr. McKissick was ordered to undergo drug counseling, not gamble or go to casinos and not possess weapons.

Federal records show that Mr. McKissick called federal probation officials in March to notify them he used cocaine days before he had a drug test. Officials increased the frequency of his drug testing.

<http://www.telegram.com/article/20130405/NEWS/104059728/1003/NEWS03>

USA, OH, DAMASCUS

APRIL 6 2013.

GAS STORAGE TANK EXPLODES IN DAMASCUS

An oil and gas storage tank exploded on Thursday afternoon near a property on Diagonal Road in Damascus. The Damascus Fire Department, along with Goshen Township Police responded to the incident behind a property at 13655 Diagonal Road. Detective Kevin Stratton, of the Goshen Township Police Department, said no smoke or fire broke out and it was still unclear on Friday morning what caused the blast, when the cap on the tank blew off, rupturing the tank. Stratton added that a large amount of oil was visible on the ground, which required clean-up. Property owners in the area reported a white plume of smoke, but none was visible when firefighters arrived, Stratton said. Landowners in the area also reported a loud noise. The incident comes after two similar incidents, one in Wayne County's Chippewa Township and another in Minerva, when storage tanks exploded in early March just days apart. In those instances, firefighters were called in to extinguish the flames. The Damascus Fire Department is currently investigating the incident.

<http://www.vindy.com/news/2013/apr/05/gas-storage-tank-explodes-in-damascus/?nw>

USA, ARK, MAYFLOWER

APRIL 6 2013.

ARKANSAS OIL SPILL: TIMELINE

Friday marks one week since an ExxonMobil pipeline burst in the town of Mayflower, Arkansas, spilling thousands of barrels of toxic tar sands. Town residents say they are being kept in the dark over compensation and the cleanup by Exxon.

April 14

ExxonMobil has compelled media outlets in Arkansas to pull a satirical advertisement critical of its business

945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955

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practices calling it “defamatory.” The ad is part of the ongoing campaign by ExxonHatesYourChildren.com that tries to educate the public about how taxpayers subsidize fossil fuel companies like Exxon.

Meanwhile, the Arkansas Department of Health approved a re-entry plan for 10 homes in the evacuated area, Mayflower Incident Unified Command Joint Information Center said Sunday.

In addition, at least 26 private residences and public buildings have been cleared.

ExxonMobil is developing a plan to address concerns about the long-term value of homes in the North Woods neighbourhood, including the possibility of buying up the properties. 237 claims have been made as of April 12.

April 11

No oil-contaminated water has spilled outside the surrounding perimeter area of Lake Conway following a heavy rain storm in Arkansas, the Mayflower Incident Unified Command Joint Information Center announced on Thursday, as the clean-up continues.

The Arkansas Department of Health has allowed up to 10 families to return to their homes in the evacuated area following indoor air monitoring. Meanwhile, 208 insurance claims have been made as of April 10.

Pipe operator, ExxonMobil anticipates the damaged segment of the pipe will be removed this week to be sent to an independent third-party laboratory for metallurgy testing.

April 10

Most of the free-standing oil has been recovered at the site of the oil spill in Mayflower, according to an update by Exxon on the cleanup efforts. Severe storms were forecast for the day, so emergency responders worked to ensure the safety of the equipment and people. Exxon also reported that the evacuation of nearby residents is continuing. Monitoring of the area’s air quality has not shown an increase in any health hazards.

The emergency response also involves recovering wild animals that suffered from the oil spill:

“Approximately 140 live animals have been captured to date. Thirteen animals of various species have been released and approximately 27 are still being cleaned,” Exxon said. The majority of the wildlife captured was reptiles, mostly venomous snakes. About 700 people are currently working on the cleanup. Around 28,200 barrels of oily water have been recovered from the site, with 5,000 barrels of oil initially spilled. The cause of the incident is still under investigation.

A popular blog based out of Arkansas revealed today that at least 19 local law enforcement officers are working on behalf of ExxonMobil in uniform as private security. According to the Mayflower Police Department, three or four officers are involved.

Police Chief Bob Satkowski confirmed that Exxon required the officers to wear their uniforms, though a spokeswoman with the company stated via email that they believed whether an off-duty officer wore a uniform was up to the individual.

“I feel like these officers have a real conflict of interest,” said Mickey H. Osterreicher, general counsel for the National Press Photographers Association. Police and deputies working off-duty shouldn’t just do everything Exxon says to do, he said.

April 9

The recovery and clean-up team involves some 700 people including federal, state and local personnel. The authorities are now preparing a contingency plan for the storm forecast for Wednesday, which includes securing equipment and strengthening a containment system protecting Lake Conway, Mayflower Incident Unified Command Joint Information Center said in new press release.

Some wildlife, surrounding the contaminated area has suffered as twenty-three ducks, a nutria, and five turtles died on Tuesday. Air quality samples by the US Environmental Protection Agency and ExxonMobil are being reviewed by the Arkansas Department of Health in a continued effort to return the families to their homes.

So far about 28,000 barrels of oily water have been recovered, according to the Unified Command estimates.

April 8

Four residents have been allowed to return to their homes in Mayflower after the Arkansas Department of Health conducted air quality tests around the residences, the Mayflower Incident Unified Command Joint Information Center said in a press release. The remaining 18 homes need to be cleaned before residents can return.

ExxonMobil has agreed to fund the cleanup effort and has promised to process all valid insurance claims. The oil giant has also opened a hotline for residents affected by the spill. So far, about 157 claims have been made as of 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

April 8.

Environmental authorities said that the fish in the main lake in the region have not been affected while tests on water samples show Lake Conway to be oil-free and is safe to drink.

April 7

Members of Pipeliners Union 798 told Mayflower residents that negligence on the part of ExxonMobil is to blame for the recent oil spill during a meeting with homeowners on Saturday.

"The companies like ExxonMobil, they don't want to spend the money to fix these old lines. Fifty percent of the lines in the United States were built in the 50s and 60s and they're worn out," CBS affiliate THV 11 cites union member Danny Hendrix as saying.

The Pipeliners Union presented 22 families displaced by the pipeline rupture with checks for \$1000.

ExxonMobil responded to the claims, saying the pipeline, which is inspected using inline inspection tools, is monitored by the company's control center in Houston. The oil giant further stated that it follows "the regulatory requirements for inspection and maintenance of that pipeline."

April 6

A Mayflower beekeeper has found dead bees soaked in oil outside her hive, local news agency KARK reports. The insects have been apparently pollinating plants in the polluted area. The beekeeper has since called the Arkansas Plant Board and an emergency evacuation is taking place to remove the bees.

Two women hailing from Mayflower, Arkansas have filed the first lawsuit against ExxonMobil in connection with last week's oil spill. Attorneys for Kimla Greene and Kathryn Jane Roachell Chunn filed the lawsuit in federal court Friday.

According to the lawsuit, a change in the type of oil and the direction of flow helped to rupture the pipeline, which caused the major spill, and therefore ExxonMobil "are strictly liable for ultra-hazardous conditions that proximately cause injuries to people," reports local TV channel KTHV.

ExxonMobil is being asked to pay "for damages caused by Defendants' strict (absolute) liability in an amount in excess of \$75,000.00, exclusive of costs and interest for individual damages in excess of \$5,000,000.00 of costs and interest for damages in the aggregate."

Founder of Wide Awake News Charlie McGrath spoke to RT, striking out at big oil for conducting business in a way that makes it more lucrative to wait for a disaster to happen, rather than take preventive measures – with taxpayers often bearing the brunt.

"These corporations can afford to grease the wheels of legislation in DC. So, these things benefit them. These are billions of dollars they have to invest in infrastructure now – and most certainly, it would be an expensive proposition. But why do this when you can just wait for a disaster to happen, and in a lot of cases, the bill ends up being shifted to the taxpayer."

It is even more troubling when oil companies seek to avoid damage claims altogether by exploiting legal loopholes:

"In this instance, I believe Exxon could potentially get out of any damages or a lot of the damages because [the oil] wasn't classified as crude oil – because bitumen is this thinned out oil sand," McGrath said.

April 5

Multiple journalists have complained about being denied access to the spill site, and even threatened with arrest, Meanwhile, Mother Jones reported.

Michael Hibblen, who reports for radio station KUAR, was at the site on Wednesday when police deputies suddenly struck an aggressive tone:

"It was less than 90 seconds before suddenly the sheriff's deputies started yelling that all the media people had to leave, that ExxonMobil had decided they don't want you here, you have to leave. They even referred to it as "Exxon Media"...Some reporters were like, "Who made this decision? Who can we talk to?" The sheriff's deputies started saying, "You have to leave. You have 10 seconds to leave or you will be arrested."

Inside Climate News reporter Lisa Song, was also threatened with arrest for criminal trespass when she approached the Exxon command center looking for government representatives from the EPA and the Department of Transportation.

Exxon VP of Operations, Karen Tyrone, says the company has increased the size of the cleanup crew working in Mayflower to more than 640 people working 24 hours a day to keep the oil from spreading.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

"Precaution is the word here. We're not going to put people at risk. We want to make sure everyone feels comfortable before these residents return to their homes," she said.

Visiting the scene on Wednesday, Arkansas Attorney General Dustin McDaniel estimated that 600 responders were on the ground at that time.

In Friday's press release ExxonMobil detailed the damage that had been done to the surrounding ecosystem and the wild life in the area.

April 4

The case of the ExxonMobil's Pegasus pipeline has thrown light on the blurry legislation surrounding the amount of crude oil that can be transported through a pipeline.

The 65-year-old line was originally designed to transport thinner oil at a comparatively low pressure and in the opposite direction. This changed seven years ago when the company began to use the pipeline to transport diluted bitumen from Canada to the Gulf Coast.

Despite the increased pressure necessary and the greater strain on the pipeline, Federal Law does not require any safety reviews for such changes to be implemented.

"Our regulations don't specify how much product a pipeline carries. There is no regulation if they want to change the type of crude they carry," said Damon Hill, a spokesman for the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, a part of the Transportation Department to website insideclimatenews.org. "As far as reversing the flow of a pipeline, it is not a safety issue."

The Mayflower pipeline was built in the 1940s. While that may seem surprisingly ancient to some, many of the country's pipelines are of a similar age.

"Over 50% of the nation's pipelines were constructed in the 1950's and 1960's during the creation of the interstate pipeline network built in response to the huge demand for energy in the thriving post-World War II economy," a 2011 report by the US Department of Transportation revealed. "Some pipelines were built even earlier."

Separately, local officials announced on Thursday that the drinking water and air quality in Mayflower do not pose a threat to the town's inhabitants following the spillage.

April 3

ExxonMobil has begun digging out residents' oil soaked lawns and replacing them with fresh turf. However, the plan to excavate the area where the pipe ruptured in order to repair it remains under review.

Exxon may be able to avoid paying into a government oil cleanup fund, leaving the American taxpayer to foot the bill for the Mayflower spillage, David Turnbull, campaign director for Oil Change International, told RT. He says that the substance being transported in the pipeline was tar sands oil and therefore was exempt from the Oil Spill Liability Trust.

"The IRS has classified tar sands as different from conventional oil, and thus the tax levied to fill the liability trust fund is not levied on tar sands crude. It's a loophole that should be closed, as it doesn't line up with the actual intent of the tax or the fund," David Turnbull told RT.

The Federal Aviation Administration has changed the conditions of the no-fly zone above the Mayflower oil spill to allow for media access, said spokesperson Lynn Lunsford in an email. She said it was amended because "there is no reason to keep media out."

"It should have contained a provision to allow media over flights from the beginning, so we corrected it as soon as we noticed the error," Lunsford said.

April 2

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announces a no-fly zone over the Mayflower oil spill, igniting speculation that ExxonMobil is trying to curb press coverage of the spillage. The no-fly measure, which will stay in place "until further notice," is under the control of Tom Suhrhoff, aviation advisor to ExxonMobil. The ban applies specifically to aircraft flying at 1,000 feet or lower, inciting suspicions it is purposefully aimed at press helicopters.

"They are using at least one helicopter to provide aerial support for the cleanup," Lynn Lunsford spokesperson for the FAA said.

"For safety reasons, they asked us to protect the airspace 1,000 feet above the area to allow the aircraft to move as needed." Mayflower resident Chris Harrell tweets that Exxon had told the town's inhabitants that their claims would only be processed after the cleanup had been completed. The company did not specify when this would be.

The Arkansas Attorney General has launched an investigation into the ExxonMobil spillage. Exxon

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spokeswoman Kim Jordan said that the company will cooperate with the investigation wherever necessary and that they were developing a plan to dig down and repair the rupture. Exxon has still been unable to say how long the cleanup will last and when the oil pipeline will be operational again.

Meanwhile, cleanup teams have reportedly recovered 14 "oiled" ducks, two turtles, and one muskrat from the oil slick. They have been sent for treatment.

In response to questioning over whether or not Exxon intended to cover the full costs of the cleanup, the company states it was providing full compensation for local residents.

Exxon is "paying all valid claims relating to the spill and providing interim housing for people from the homes which the city of Mayflower recommended be evacuated following Friday's spill."

According to legal guidelines the diluted bitumen that inundated Mayflower is not technically oil, which could exempt Exxon from contributing to the government's oil spillage cleanup fund.

April 1

Arkansas Attorney General Dustin McDaniel launches an investigation into the spill and urges ExxonMobil to preserve all documents and information related to the accident and ongoing cleanup. ExxonMobil pledges to develop a plan for the phased return of the residents of all 22 evacuated homes.

Residents voice worries about the long-term effects of the disaster and what they will do to the local economy.

"The major concern for many people in our neighborhood is the long-term impact, both environmentally and financially. For example, what is this going to do to our property values?" said resident Chris Harrell to Reuters.

Meanwhile, White House spokesman Jay Carney said on Monday that he had not yet discussed the Arkansas pipeline with President Obama, but insists that the government "takes the safety of our many pipelines in this country very seriously...and, in cases like these, investigations are undertaken and steps are taken to mitigate the damage and hopefully avoid them in the future."

31 March

Police set up a checkpoint isolating the oil spillage as helicopters fly over the area and map the extent of the spill, an anonymous eyewitness told Reuters. The spill in the small town of Mayflower has sparked a debate over the environmental risks of using aging pipelines to transport heavy crude oil. Exxon has deployed 15 vacuum trucks, 33 storage tanks and 120 workers to the cleanup site.

Local news reports that journalists were barred from entering the spill site for 30 hours after the disaster.

30 March

People have been evacuated from their homes as crude oil fills the streets of the town of Mayflower, causing havoc.

"The smell is quite horrendous both outside and inside our home. There is a strong smell of oil in our vehicles, as well," resident Chris Harrell told RT.

ExxonMobil has shut down the pipeline following the rupture and has begun preparing a response for a spill of over 10,000 barrels of crude. Clean-up crews have already recovered approximately 4,500 barrels of oil and water.

29 March

ExxonMobil's Pegasus pipeline bursts near the town of Mayflower, Arkansas, inundating the town with over 10,000 barrels worth of crude oil.

Exxon released a statement on Friday night saying that there was no additional oil spilling and that additional trucks had been drafted in to assist with the cleanup.

The US Environmental Protection Agency has categorized the incident as a "major spill."

<http://rt.com/usa/arkansas-spill-oil-exxon-325/>

USA, TX, HOUSTON

APRIL 6 2013.

THIRD MAJOR OIL SPILL IN A WEEK: SHELL PIPELINE BREAKS IN TEXAS

Thousands of gallons of oil have spilled from a pipeline in Texas, the third accident of its kind in only a week.

Shell Pipeline, a unit of Royal Dutch Shell Plc, shut down their West Columbia, Texas, pipeline last Friday after electronic calculations conducted by the US National Response Center showed that upwards of 700 barrels had been

945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955

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lost, amounting to almost 30,000 gallons of crude oil.

By Monday, Shell spokespeople said inspectors found “no evidence” of an oil leak, but days later it was revealed that a breach did occur. Representatives with the US Coast Guard confirmed to Dow Jones on Thursday that roughly 50 barrels of oil spilled from a pipe near Houston, Texas and entered a waterway that connects to the Gulf of Mexico.

Coast Guard Petty Officer Steven Lehman said that Shell had dispatched clean-up crews that were working hard to correct any damage to Vince Bayou, a small waterway that runs for less than 20 miles from the Houston area into a shipping channel that opens into the Gulf.

The spill was contained, said Lehman, who was hesitant to offer an official number on how much crude was lost in the accident. According to Shell spokeswoman Kim Windon, though, the damage could have been quite significant. After being presented with the estimate that said as much as 700 barrels were found to have leaked from the pipeline due to an unknown cause, investigators determined that 60 barrels entered the bayou.

"That's a very early estimate--things can change," Officer Lehman told Dow Jones.

Meanwhile, though, rescue works in Arkansas have been getting their hands dirty responding to an emergency there. A rupture in ExxonMobil's Pegasus pipeline late last week sent thousands of barrels of oil into the small town of Mayflower, around 25 miles outside of Little Rock. Authorities evacuated more than 20 homes in response, and by this Thursday roughly 19,000 barrels had been recovered.

Another incident in Canada this week caused an estimated 400 barrels — or roughly 16,800 gallons — of oil to be compromised in northern Ontario when a train derailed. Originally, Canadian Pacific Railway Ltd said only four barrels were lost in the accident.

<http://rt.com/usa/shell-pipeline-oil-texas-409/>

BRAZIL, SAO SEBASTIAO, TEBAR

APRIL 8 2013.

PETROBRAS OIL SPILL REACHES SAO PAULO BEACHES

Fluids from a terminal operated by state-controlled oil giant Petrobras have reached several beaches in Sao Paulo state, forcing authorities to close off the area, Brazilian officials said. The spill of unspecified petroleum derivatives, whose size is not known, occurred on Friday afternoon at the Almirante Barroso Terminal, or Tebar, in the city of Sao Sebastiao. The municipal environmental agency asked citizens to stay away from nine area beaches, the city government said. Officials are still trying to determine the extent of the spill, which appears to be large, Sao Sebastiao Environmental Secretary Eduardo Hipolito do Rego said in a statement. “We do not know yet if it is crude, but we can confirm that it is a petroleum derivative. The spill is of large proportions, so much so that it affected several beaches. We cannot rule out that the product will spread to neighboring cities,” the environmental official said. Transpetro, a Petrobras subsidiary, confirmed Saturday afternoon that a fuel spill occurred at Tebar, a marine terminal that handles nearly 55 percent of the petroleum consumed in Brazil, the Sao Sebastiao city government said.

<http://www.hispanicallyspeakingnews.com/latino-daily-news/details/petrobras-oil-spill-reaches-sao-paulo-beaches/23631/>

MEXICO, MEXICO CITY

APRIL 8 2013.

7 MODELO BEER WORKERS KILLED WHILE CLEANING TANK AT MEXICAN BREWERY

Seven workers were killed Sunday while cleaning a tank at a brewery in Mexico City for Mexico's Grupo Modelo, the parent company of Corona beer, the company and local authorities said. Few details about the accident were immediately released.

Authorities in Mexico City have reported that the 7 workers died in a tank at a Grupo Modelo brewery. The workers were said to have been cleaning the tank, and it is thought likely that they may have died from toxic fumes, although investigators are still currently looking into the incident to confirm the cause of death.

The deaths occurred yesterday morning in a tank that was undergoing maintenance and cleaning, a spokeswoman for owners Grupo Modelo said.

A company statement said: “Modelo is deeply sorry for this incident and will –support the affected families permanently.”

The deaths occurred yesterday morning in a tank that was undergoing maintenance and cleaning, a spokeswoman for owners Grupo Modelo said.

A company statement said: “Modelo is deeply sorry for this incident and will –support the affected families

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permanently.”

“Early in the morning of April 7, we had an accident at Cervecería Modelo in Mexico City, which occurred in a confined area in a tank in which cleaning and upkeep works were being done,” said Jennifer Shelley, a spokeswoman for Grupo Modelo. “Unfortunately the accident resulted in seven deaths.”

Building manager at the brewery, Francisco Lopez Bravo, has also explained that the 7 workers got locked inside the cistern as they went about cleaning the tanks. The company did not give details of how the workers died. The family-controlled Mexican brewer, maker of the No. 1 imported beer in the United States

There is no remaining risk to the surrounding neighborhood, the environment or the rest of the plant and its personnel, Shelley said in the statement. The brewery is operating normally and production is not expected to be affected, she said in an e-mailed response to questions.

Cervecería Modelo, with currently a total capacity of 11.1 million hectoliters, was the company’s first plant and began operating in 1925. Grupo Modelo is in the process of being sold to Belgium’s Anheuser-Busch InBev, but Grupo Modelo’s name, identity, heritage and Mexico City headquarters will be maintained.

The brewery has been in operation in Mexico City since 1925, and brews a number of popular beers including Corona. The brewery is also in the process of being sold to Anheuser-Busch InBev.

The families of the deceased workers have been contacted, and officials at the brewery have said that it plans to support them through the difficult time. A statement released has said, “Modelo is deeply sorry for this incident and will support the affected families permanently.”

<http://guardianlv.com/2013/04/modelo-beer-workers-killed-while-cleaning-tank-at-mexican-brewery/>

CANADA, B.C, PORT MOODY

APRIL 11 2013.

SUNCOR SPILLS 225 BARRELS OF BIODEGRADABLE FUEL FROM PORT MOODY PLANT

STORAGE TANK LEAKED FUEL ONTO THE SITE AND POSSIBLY INTO THE BURRARD INLET SATURDAY EVENING.

At about 8 pm last Saturday, Suncor Energy Inc. spilled 225 barrels of biodegradable diesel fuel from its Port Moody plant. A small amount of fuel may also have made it into the Burrard Inlet just north of the plant.

Suncor spokesperson Sneh Seetal said the company has response plans in place for all of its materials.

“We took a number of immediate actions, and that involved mobilizing our response team to immediately contain the leak and isolate the tank,” she said over the phone from Alberta. “We also drained the tank we trenched around the tank to collect any material so we could dispose of it.”

She said fuel left in the leaky tank was transferred to another storage unit, and the company reported the spill to the Ministry of the Environment at both the provincial and federal levels.

The fuel in question is called R100, a soybean-based, biodegradable diesel fuel. Seetal said it’s clear and odourless.

The company doesn’t know yet what caused the leak, but Seetal said cleanup is the first priority.

“We engaged Western Canada Marine Response Corporation to assist with the cleanup effort for the oil that would have spilled onto the property,” she said. “That involved deploying booms and absorbent pads to capture any product that was not contained in the trench.”

She said the community has not been formally notified.

“Even though we believe a very small amount of the biodegradable product reached the inlet, for us any release of the product not intended for discharge is not acceptable and that’s why we activated our response plan immediately.”

The plant is divided into three levels. The highest borders a residential neighbourhood and the lowest looks onto the water. The spill occurred in the middle section where most of the fuel is stored.

<http://www.vancouverobserver.com/environment/suncor-spills-225-barrels-biodegradable-fuel-port-moody-plant>

USA, ARK, LITTLE ROCK

APRIL 11 2013.

ARKANSAS AG SAYS OIL PIPELINE GASH 22 FEET LONG

Jeannie Nuss

An ExxonMobil pipeline that ruptured last month and spilled thousands of barrels of oil in central Arkansas has a gash in it that is 22 feet long and 2 inches wide, state Attorney General Dustin McDaniel said Wednesday.

“The pipeline rupture is substantially larger than many of us initially thought,” McDaniel told reporters Wednesday evening.

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McDaniel's update on the March 29 oil spill in Mayflower, about 25 miles northwest of Little Rock, comes as lawyers and investigators review more than 12,500 pages of documents his office received from ExxonMobil. McDaniel sent a subpoena to ExxonMobil, seeking inspection records, investigative documents and maintenance records related to its Pegasus pipeline that ruptured in Mayflower.

It wasn't immediately clear what all the documents contain; McDaniel said his office received them just before he held a news conference Wednesday.

"More documents will be received and requested from Exxon in coming days," McDaniel said. "But now everyone's priority continues to be the cleanup efforts in Mayflower."

So far, crews have recovered about 28,200 barrels of oily water and about 2,000 cubic yards of oiled soil and debris, according to a statement from ExxonMobil and local officials.

"We still do not know how much oil was released. We still do not know the exact makeup of the crude itself, of the chemical solvents used in the transportation process," McDaniel said. "And our immediate concern tonight is with the weather."

A severe thunderstorm raked the area Wednesday, but there were no immediate reports of weather-related incidents at the site of the oil spill. ExxonMobil and local officials in Mayflower said crews secured equipment and strengthened a containment system protecting the main body of nearby Lake Conway.

McDaniel said he retained a firm to conduct an independent analysis of the cleanup process. He's also retaining technical advisers to provide independent air sampling and other scientific data.

To cover those and other costs, McDaniel requested \$4 million from Exxon.

ExxonMobil spokeswoman Kim Jordan says the company has received McDaniel's letter and will respond directly to his office.

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/arkansas-ag-says-oil-pipeline-gash-22-feet-long>

USA, CALIFORNIA, RICHMOND

APRIL 16, 2013

CSB DRAFT INTERIM REPORT ON 2012 CHEVRON FIRE NOTES COMPANY FAILED TO APPLY INHERENTLY SAFER DESIGN THAT COULD HAVE PREVENTED THE ACCIDENT

Missed opportunities to apply inherently safer design, failure to identify and evaluate damage mechanism hazards, and the lack of effective safeguards culminated in the vapor cloud release and massive fire that occurred at the Chevron refinery on August 6, 2012, a draft report by the U.S. Chemical Safety Board (CSB) has found. The investigation team concluded that enhanced regulatory oversight with greater worker involvement and public participation are needed to improve oil refinery safety.

The report, subject to a Board vote at a CSB public meeting in Richmond on Friday, April 19, notes that Chevron repeatedly over a ten-year period failed to effectively apply inherently safer design principles and upgrade piping in its crude oil processing unit that was extremely corroded and ultimately ruptured on August 6, 2012. The ensuing release of hydrocarbons endangered 19 workers who narrowly escaped from a vapor cloud before it ignited, causing a fire that sent a plume across the area. 15,000 people sought medical treatment in the weeks following the accident.

The public meeting to consider the draft report is scheduled for Friday, April 19, at 6:30 p.m. at the Richmond Memorial Auditorium and Convention Center, 403 Civil Center Plaza, Richmond. The meeting will include a detailed presentation by CSB investigators, a computer-animated video recreation of the incident, a stakeholder panel discussion, and a public comment period.

The CSB investigation team proposed to the Board urgent recommendations, including that at all its refineries, Chevron perform damage mechanism hazard reviews and ensure safeguards are in place to control identified hazards. Reporting of process safety indicators to enable more effective oversight by federal, state, and local regulatory agencies is also urgently recommended.

The refinery is located in the city of Richmond; a Contra Costa County community located about ten miles northeast of San Francisco. A series of recommendations are proposed to the mayor and city council of Richmond, and the Contra Costa County supervisors, aimed at strengthening the local Industrial Safety Ordinance and driving the risk of major accidents as low as reasonably practicable.

The report recommends the governor and legislature of the State of California create a multi-agency program for all California oil refineries to improve the public accountability, transparency and performance of process safety programs. And the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was urged to assist the state to monitor the effective implementation of programs designed to improve oil refinery safety and disclosure requirements the CSB is

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recommending to the state and local agencies.

CSB Chairperson Rafael Moure-Eraso said, “Improved worker involvement, company transparency, and public participation are needed to prevent these major industrial accidents. Our findings and recommendations are directed immediately at the accident in the Bay Area, but we believe they apply to all refineries, chemical plants and general industry. There is a national need to base safety principles on inherently safer designs and applying effective safeguards to control damage mechanisms such as sulfidation corrosion. And we find that to prevent chemical accidents, regulatory agencies must maintain sufficient professional expertise to effectively oversee these highly technical industries.”

The CSB investigation team determined that although Chevron policy calls for the use of inherently safer technology in design and upgrades, the company has been implementing changes – such as the critical metallurgy of piping – without any documented, thorough analysis of the proposed inherently safer solutions. The investigators wrote, “Without such a review, the material selected cannot be analyzed to determine if it is the best inherently safer solution for the process in order to minimize risk.” The report continues, “Chevron has repeatedly failed to implement the proposed inherently safer recommendations.” Had this been done, the investigation team concluded, the accident could have been prevented.

The CSB investigation team determined that had Chevron followed its own internal recommendations, or been required by local, state or federal regulation to implement inherently safer systems during repairs, it would have years ago upgraded critical crude unit sidecut piping from carbon steel to metallurgy more resistant to sulfidation corrosion – metal deterioration caused by the presence of sulfur compounds at high temperatures in the crude unit. Such a material upgrade could have prevented the accident.

Even when rebuilding the crude oil unit after the August 2012 release and fire, the CSB report notes, Chevron did not install what the CSB considers inherently safer stainless steel piping in the destroyed distillation tower, choosing instead, with no documented inherently safer technology review, an alloy called 9-Chrome that is more corrosion-resistant than carbon steel but less resistant than stainless steel. The report notes this was despite the fact that the company did install stainless steel piping in the 4-sidecut section of the distillation tower in a nearly identical refinery unit in El Segundo, California in 2001, considering it to be the safest material.

CSB Chairperson Dr. Rafael Moure-Eraso said, “Although the sulfidation corrosion hazard is well known throughout the industry and at Chevron, the company unfortunately overlooked multiple warnings including other accidents and its own internal recommendations to replace the pipe with an inherently safer alloy that could endure the corrosive process conditions. Among other recommendations, we will be voting Friday to urge regulators to require the application of inherently safer design principles at multiple points during the process life cycle, which will drive major accident risk to as low as reasonably practicable.”

Industrial safety ordinances in both Richmond and Contra Costa County jurisdictions, the report found, have language addressing the desirability of using inherently safer processes, material, and other technology, but do not require it. Furthermore, the report states, the existing regulations do not require documentation supporting the adequacy of existing “inherently safer” claims, so Chevron did not have to document its evaluation and decision to not upgrade the 4-sidecut pipe section that ultimately failed.

At a higher regulatory level, the report notes that neither the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA), nor federal OSHA, which delegates employee safety regulation to the state, requires inherently safer processes to be utilized in any standard or regulation. Nor does either agency require damage mechanism reviews – such as corrosion – as part of formal efforts to identify and control hazards. Such reviews have been recommended by overseas regulators in the United Kingdom, the report notes.

After reviewing local, state, and federal rules and regulations, and examining the capabilities of regulators, the CSB investigation team determined that Cal/OSHA is under-resourced to adequately oversee the refinery industry in California. The report notes that between 2006 and the date of the August 2012 Chevron accident, Cal/OSHA conducted three planned inspections of the Richmond refinery, totaling only 150 inspector hours of effort. The report contrasted those inspections with federal OSHA refinery National Emphasis Program inspections between 2007 and 2011 that lasted roughly 1,000 inspector hours. When federal OSHA established its Process Safety Management or PSM standard in 1992, even more intensive Program Quality Verification facility audits were planned, but these were rarely done due to inadequate resources. The investigation team will report further on this and other related regulatory issues in its final report scheduled for later in 2013.

The CSB report emphasizes the importance of open communications between facilities and local communities concerning chemical safety and chemical risks. The report discusses the requirements of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) of 1986, and notes that “along with provisions of the EPA’s Risk Management

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Program, the regulatory purpose and substantive provisions emphasize the importance of transparency, sharing of process safety data, and public participation to prevent chemical accidents.”

The CSB interim draft report comprehensively details the corrosion process that led to the pipe failure, and the sequence of events that transpired during the emergency response following the discovery of a leak on August 6, 2012.

The investigation found Chevron should have shut down its crude oil unit as soon as a relatively small leak of “gas oil” was detected by workers, dripping from the 4-sidecut 8” pipe, rather than continuing to operate while troubleshooting the problem. Nineteen workers – including a Chevron firefighter -- narrowly escaped death or serious injury as they were engulfed in the highly flammable vapor cloud. The continued burning of the hydrocarbon process fluid resulted in a large plume of unknown particulates and vapor traveling across the area. In the weeks following the incident, approximately 15,000 people from the surrounding area sought medical treatment for ailments including breathing problems, chest pain, shortness of breath, sore throat and headaches. Approximately 20 people were admitted to hospitals for treatment.

The CSB determined that Chevron’s procedure for dealing with such leaks was to shut down the unit and then troubleshoot. But this was not done. Instead, a group of operations managers, engineers and technicians – attempted to find the source of the leak with the intent of placing a clamp device over the pipe to stop it.

To find the leak, firefighters were instructed to pull off insulation which was tightly wound and banded around the pipe. A pike pole was used at first to stab at the insulation; this likely resulted in puncturing a hole in the pipe which was already so corroded, the CSB found, it was 40% thinner than the thickness of a dime. As they were then pulling off insulation with a hook, hydrocarbon vapor released from underneath the insulation and caught fire. Firefighters quickly put out the flames, and then turned high pressure water on the insulation in a further attempt to remove it. But as the insulation peeled away, hot hydrocarbon liquid began to spray out.

A decision was made to shut the unit down, but it was too late. Suddenly the pipe ripped open. A vapor cloud formed and rapidly expanded, as the large amount of hydrocarbons in the distillation tower started to vent through the ruptured pipe. The vapor cloud immediately spread over hundreds of feet, engulfing all 19 people who had gathered nearby. The firefighters and operators struggled to escape through the dense hydrocarbon cloud, unable to see. They had to feel their way out, some on their hands and knees. Two minutes after the vapor cloud formed, it ignited. A firefighter in a fire engine was able to escape through the wall of fire in full protective gear.

The CSB determined the carbon steel piping had been originally installed at Chevron in 1976. This type of piping is especially susceptible to corrosion from hydrocarbons containing sulfur. The CSB found this is especially true if the piping happens to low in the element silicon.

The CSB draft report notes that in the ten years prior to the incident, Chevron personnel with knowledge and understanding of sulfidation corrosion made at least six recommendations to increase inspection or upgrade the metallurgy in the 4-sidecut piping. These were in 2002, 2006, 2007, 2009 and twice in 2011, including during the maintenance turnaround which immediately preceded the 2012 release. However, the recommendations made by these personnel were not implemented by Chevron management, the CSB found.

For example, the CSB learned that sulfidation corrosion had caused a major failure at Chevron’s refinery in Salt Lake City, Utah, in 2002. Chevron then performed an enhanced inspection of the 4-sidecut pipe at the Richmond refinery. It revealed accelerated thinning on the piping section that would ultimately fail in 2012. Replacement was recommended, but this did not occur, and the section of piping was never inspected again.

During the maintenance turnaround of the crude unit in 2011, Chevron inspectors examined some – but not all – locations along the 4-sidecut and found significant thinning. Some sections were replaced. However, the critical section of 4-sidecut piping was not. The report notes the turnaround management team decided the inspection data available for the piping – which was from piping elbows – did not support a material upgrade. The CSB found, however, that piping elbows are less susceptible to sulfidation corrosion, and that data should have gathered on potential corrosion from the straight sections of the 4-sidecut.

Chairperson Moure-Eraso said, “These missed opportunities to upgrade the piping that ultimately failed shows the need for significant improvements in controlling hazards such as corrosion. The recommendations we are proposing in this report will, I feel, greatly add to the safe operation of all U.S. refineries in this key industrial sector.”

This interim report focuses on mechanical integrity issues and effective accident prevention safeguards, but this accident also implicates organizational and regulatory issues that are still under investigation. The CSB is working on a final report, anticipated later this year, that will present key additional findings and recommendations as well as addressing emergency planning and reporting, emergency response, and safety culture.

The CSB is an independent federal agency charged with investigating industrial chemical accidents. The

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

agency's board members are appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. CSB investigations look into all aspects of chemical accidents, including physical causes such as equipment failure as well as inadequacies in regulations, industry standards, and safety management systems.

The Board does not issue citations or fines but does make safety recommendations to plants, industry organizations, labor groups, and regulatory agencies such as OSHA and EPA. Visit our website, www.csb.gov.

USA, TX, WEST

APRIL 18 2013.

TOXIC CLOUD THREATENS THOUSANDS: ENTIRE TOWN FACES EVACUATION OVER AMMONIUM NITRATE SUFFOCATION RISK

Michael Zennie and Anna Edwards

Emergency workers have played down fears of a toxic air leak following the fertilizer plant explosion in West, Texas.

Initially reports suggested the farming community would be under a secondary danger of inhaling ammonia fumes which can cause respiratory problems.

However, Waco police chief Patrick Swanton, who is leading the operation on behalf of the town of West which is 20 miles away, says he now believes that danger has been mitigated.

'The town is secure. There are plenty of law enforcement officials that are stationed around the town,' Swanton said.

'There is no fire out of control. There is no chemical escape from the fertilizer plant that is out of control.'

'Air quality, at this point, is not an issue. It is not a concern.'

Last night authorities were concerned about a possible gas cloud creeping across the area from the blaze.

The U.S. Chemical Safety Board deployed a 'large investigation team' to the scene and The Texas Commission of Environmental Quality began monitoring air in the area.

Gov. Rick Perry said the air was being constantly monitored and gas distribution has been disconnected.

'We are ... gathering information as details continue to emerge about this incident,' he said.

'We have also mobilized state resources to help local authorities. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of West, and the first responders on the scene.'

Locals reported a strong chemical smell after last night's explosion which occurred just before 8pm and doctors reported some people had irritated eyes and respiratory issues as a result of the fumes.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2310874/Texas-explosion-Firefighters-battle-toxic-cloud-noxious-ammonium-nitrate.html>

USA, ILL, SHELBYVILLE

APRIL 18 2013.

LIGHTNING CAUSES OIL TANK FIRE

With the help of 12 other fire departments, Shelbyville Fire Protection District battled a type of fire Tuesday for which it had no experience fighting.

That afternoon, lightning struck a large oil storage tank, containing about 3,000 gallons of crude oil southeast of Clarksburg on county road 600N, about a half mile east of county 2050E. The strike caused the top of the tank to be blown into the air, taking out a power line and barely missing a metal storage building before landing more than 100 yards to the east of the fire. The force of the landing plunged the tank three feet into the ground.

"It was a confirmed lightning strike — neighbor saw it," said Shelbyville fire engineer William "Perk" Wilson.

The department arrived on the scene about 2:20 p.m. and immediately began calling for help from other departments for water and foam chemical to smother the flames. More than 100 personnel and 25 pieces of equipment, including tankers, responded to the call. Local firefighters have not been trained for this kind of incident, but knew that the fire needed to be smothered because water alone would only spread the flames.

"In my 31 years as a firefighter, I've never seen anything like that," said Shelbyville Fire Chief Gary Lynch.

"We've had small scale barrel training, but this was our first actual oil storage incident. It was pretty fast-paced."

Another concern was a nearby tank containing xylene, which is extremely flammable, and other tanks with inhibitors, which were not explosive but also were flammable.

The fire was contained to a 30-by-70-foot area thanks to an earthen dam around the storage tanks. It took a little more than four hours to get it under control.

"We had to use the water to keep those tanks cool," Lynch said.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

A storage building on the site was also destroyed in the fire.

The oil storage tank is owned by Illini Resources. The land is owned by Russell Slifer. No injuries were reported.

"The guys did an outstanding job. It was a dangerous situation and there was a lot of adrenaline flowing," Lynch said. "It was such an unusual incident. I hope to never see anything like that again in my career."

Windsor, Strasburg, Stewardson, Shumway, Sullivan, Bethany, Findlay, Tower Hill, Pana, Cowden, Beecher City and Taylorville responded to the scene with mutual aid.

"I want to say thank you to all the departments. We couldn't have done it without them," Lynch said.
<http://effinghamdailynews.com/local/x1097426667/Lightning-causes-oil-tank-fire>

USA, CA, SAN FRANCISCO

APRIL 19 2013.

CHEVRON EL SEGUNDO REFINERY PIPES CORRODED

Jason Dearen

Tests of pipe samples from Chevron Corp.'s El Segundo refinery found corrosion to an extent similar to the pipe that failed and caused a large fire at the company's Richmond facility, a report released Thursday found.

The tests found up to 60 percent wall loss in a pipe at the El Segundo refinery that processed the same type of crude as its sister facility in Northern California, according to the U.S. Chemical Safety Board and California Division of Occupational Safety and Health.

Chevron voluntarily inspected the pipes at its El Segundo facility after an Aug. 6 fire in Richmond caused by a corroded, 1970s-era pipe.

The resulting vapor cloud engulfed 19 workers, who escaped injury, and the fire that followed sent a plume of black smoke into the sky which drifted over nearby neighborhoods.

Some 15,000 residents sought medical treatment for breathing and eye irritation problems, though just 20 were hospitalized, according to a government investigation.

Because the El Segundo and Richmond crude units are nearly identical facilities, Chevron took the El Segundo unit out of service for inspections after the fire.

Tests ordered by Cal/OSHA found that corrosion in El Segundo had damaged pipe samples in ways similar to the one that failed in Richmond, though not as extensively. Cal/OSHA also issued 25 violations and nearly \$1 million in fines associated with the Richmond fire.

Chevron replaced the pipes in September.

Still, Rod Spackman, a spokesman for Chevron's El Segundo refinery, said the company believed the corroded pipes at the facility were still "suitable for continued operation" even after inspecting them.

"However, in an abundance of caution, we nevertheless replaced portions of the piping system," Spackman said.

Both the El Segundo and the Richmond refineries were built in the late 1970s.

They process crude oil that has sulfur in concentrations that are unsafe for the carbon steel pipes, some of which date back to when the refineries were constructed, according to the chemical board.

The sulfur is corrosive to the carbon steel pipes, and was identified as the cause of the damage that led to the accident in Richmond.

"The tests underscore the importance of new actions to eliminate this hazard through requiring inherently safer designs and materials, rather than relying on inspections alone to find developing safety problems," Rafael Moure-Eraso, the chemical board's chairman, said in a statement.

Chevron said it believed the CSB was overstating the danger posed by the corrosion in pipes at its El Segundo facility.

"While the report determines that the replaced piping components had general thinning consistent with ... sulfidation corrosion, we believe the CSB's characterization of the extent of this corrosion ... is incomplete and leads to the false impression that the El Segundo pipe was in imminent danger of experiencing a failure," Spackman said in a statement.

The company said it is cooperating with state and federal investigations, and implementing stricter inspections and oversight of its facilities.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Cal/OHSA has also given the go-ahead to Chevron to restart the rebuilt crude unit destroyed in last year's fire. The company expects that to happen before the end of June.

<http://www.sfgate.com/business/energy/article/Report-Chevron-El-Segundo-refinery-pipes-corroded-4446525.php#ixzz2S48Si1iY>

USA, MI, LUPTON

APRIL 19 2013.

DIESEL FUEL SPILLS INTO LUPTON CREEK

Tim Barnum

A 250-gallon diesel fuel tank at Green Briar Golf Course emptied into surrounding waterways Tuesday, April 16, and a cleanup crew is attempting to contain the spill, which reached a tributary of the Rifle River.

Kip Cronk, an environmental quality analyst with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, said the DEQ was contacted by homeowners near the golf course Tuesday night who reported smelling diesel fumes. Cronk said DEQ workers got on scene around 6:30 p.m. and investigated the area where the odor was reported.

"We got out there and tracked the site back up there to the fuel tank up on the Green Briar golf course," he said.

Ernie McPherson, the owner of Green Briar Golf Course, said it appeared foul play could have caused the fuel to spill from the tank.

"It looks like they tried to syphon some out from the vent, and got enough out to tip it over," he said.

The tank was upright when it was discovered, though, McPherson added. He said it is possible it was leaking, but an air pressure test needs to be conducted so he can determine whether there is a leak present.

McPherson said the golf course's insurance company has been contacted and investigated the scene. He said the cleanup company, Kessler Environmental Excavation, will be working in the area until the spill is contained and cleaned up.

"We regret what happened and we're taking the appropriate steps to clean up what happened," he said.

Cronk said when the spill was reported, the DEQ's first concern was taking steps to keep the fuel from reaching the Rifle River. As of April 17, he said no fuel had reached the river.

"We checked out the Rifle River yesterday and there was nothing there, and we went back to the next street to the east, and there was no sign of it there either," he told the Herald April 18.

Fuel oil can have several adverse effects on the environment, according to Cronk.

"It's a water quality issue," he said. "It can have an impact on the vegetation and plants, and have some impact on the wildlife depending on how bad it is."

Kessler Environmental is using absorbent pads and absorbent booms to pull the fuel from the water, Cronk said. He said dark red spots found by property owners near the spill are the most threatening spots because the fuel has not broken down yet where they are present.

"Whenever they can find those red spots, they right away get the pads in there, or get a boom in there to clean it up," he said.

Rain has made the cleanup more difficult, and caused to fuel to spread over a wider area, Cronk said.

The tank from which the oil was leaked was filled April 2, according to McPherson. Cronk said the full amount spilled from it is unknown.

"We're not exactly sure how much fuel leaked out of it," he said. "We're sure the tank is empty and it was filled up a couple of weeks ago."

The scene will be monitored and over the next few weeks until the spill is fully cleaned, Cronk said.

http://www.ogemawherald.com/stories/Diesel-fuel-spills-into-Lupton-creek,96931?category_id=1&town_id=7&sub_type=stories,photos

USA, TX, WEST

APRIL 21 2013.

TEXAS FERTILIZER PLANT STORED 1,350 TIMES THE AMOUNT OF CHEMICAL THAT WOULD TRIGGER OVERSIGHT

Joshua Schneyer, Ryan McNeill And Janet Roberts

The fertilizer plant that exploded on Wednesday, obliterating part of a small Texas town and killing at least 14 people, had last year been storing 1,350 times the amount of ammonium nitrate that would normally trigger safety oversight by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Yet a person familiar with Department of Homeland Security operations said the company that owns the plant, West Fertilizer, did not tell the agency about the potentially explosive fertilizer as it is required to do, leaving one
945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

of the principal regulators of ammonium nitrate – which can also be used in bomb making – unaware of any danger there.

Fertilizer plants and depots must report to the Department of Homeland Security when they hold 400 pounds (180 kilograms) or more of the substance. Filings this year with the Texas Department of State Health Services, which weren't shared with the Department of Homeland Security, show the plant had 270 tons of it on hand last year.

A U.S. congressman and several safety experts called into question on Friday whether incomplete disclosure or regulatory gridlock may have contributed to the disaster.

"It seems this manufacturer was willfully off the grid," Bennie Thompson, ranking member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, said in a statement. "This facility was known to have chemicals well above the threshold amount to be regulated under the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Act (CFATS), yet we understand that DHS did not even know the plant existed until it blew up."

Company officials did not return repeated calls seeking comment on its handling of chemicals and reporting practices. Late on Friday, plant owner Donald Adair released a general statement expressing sorrow over the incident but saying West Fertilizer would have little further comment while it co-operated with investigators to try to determine what happened.

"This tragedy will continue to hurt deeply for generations to come," Adair said in the statement.

Failure to report significant volumes of hazardous chemicals at a site can lead the Department of Homeland Security to fine or shut down fertilizer operations, a person familiar with the agency's monitoring regime said. Though the department has the authority to carry out spot inspections at facilities, it has a small budget for that and only a "small number" of field auditors, the person said.

Firms are responsible for self-reporting the volumes of ammonium nitrate and other volatile chemicals they hold to the Department of Homeland Security, which then helps measure plant risks and devise security and safety plans based on them.

Since the agency never received any so-called top-screen report from West Fertilizer, the facility was not regulated or monitored by the department under its CFAT standards, largely designed to prevent sabotage of sites and to keep chemicals from falling into criminal hands.

The Department of Homeland Security focuses "specifically on enhancing security to reduce the risk of terrorism at certain high-risk chemical facilities," said agency spokesman Peter Boogaard. "The West Fertilizer Co. facility in West, Texas is not currently regulated under the CFATS program."

The West Fertilizer facility was subject to other reporting, permitting and safety programs, spread across at least seven state and federal agencies, a patchwork of regulation that critics say makes it difficult to ensure thorough oversight.

An expert in chemical safety standards said the two major federal government programs that are supposed to ensure chemical safety in industry – led by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) – do not regulate the handling or storage of ammonium nitrate. That task falls largely to the Department of Homeland Security and the local and state agencies that oversee emergency planning and response.

More than 4,000 sites nationwide are subject to the Department of Homeland Security program.

"This shows that the enforcement routine has to be more robust, on local, state and federal levels," said the expert, Sam Mannan, director of process safety center at Texas A&M University. "If information is not shared with agencies, which appears to have happened here, then the regulations won't work."

Chemical safety experts and local officials suspect this week's blast was caused when ammonium nitrate was set ablaze. Authorities suspect the disaster was an industrial accident, but haven't ruled out other possibilities.

The fertilizer is considered safe when stored properly, but can explode at high temperatures and when it reacts with other substances.

"I strongly believe that if the proper safeguards were in place, as are at thousands of CFATS-regulated plants across the country, the loss of life and destruction could have been far less extensive," said Mr. Thompson.

A blaze was reported shortly before a massive explosion leveled dozens of homes and blew out an apartment building.

A U-Haul truck packed with the substance mixed with fuel oil exploded to raze the Oklahoma federal building in 1995. Another liquid gas fertilizer kept on the West Fertilizer site, anhydrous ammonia, is subject to Department of Homeland Security reporting and can explode under extreme heat.

Wednesday's blast heightens concerns that regulations governing ammonium nitrate and other chemicals – present in at least 6,000 depots and plants in farming states across the country – are insufficient. The facilities serve farmers in rural areas that typically lack stringent land zoning controls, many of the facilities sit near residential areas.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Apart from the Department of Homeland Security, the West Fertilizer site was subject to a hodgepodge of regulation by the EPA, OSHA, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Texas Department of State Health Services, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the Office of the Texas State Chemist.

But the material is exempt from some mainstays of U.S. chemicals safety programs. For instance, the EPA's Risk Management Program (RMP) requires companies to submit plans describing their handling and storage of certain hazardous chemicals. Ammonium nitrate is not among the chemicals that must be reported.

In its RMP filings, West Fertilizer reported on its storage of anhydrous ammonia and said that it did not expect a fire or explosion to affect the facility, even in a worst-case scenario. And it had not installed safeguards such as blast walls around the plant.

A separate EPA program, known as Tier II, requires reporting of ammonium nitrate and other hazardous chemicals stored above certain quantities. Tier II reports are submitted to local fire departments and emergency planning and response groups to help them plan for and respond to chemical disasters. In Texas, the reports are collected by the Department of State Health Services. Over the last seven years, according to reports West Fertilizer filed, 2012 was the only time the company stored ammonium nitrate at the facility.

It reported having 270 tons on site.

"That's just a god awful amount of ammonium nitrate," said Bryan Haywood, the owner of a hazardous chemical consulting firm in Milford, Ohio. "If they were doing that, I would hope they would have gotten outside help."

In response to a request from Reuters, Haywood, who has been a safety engineer for 17 years, reviewed West Fertilizer's Tier II sheets from the last six years. He said he found several items that should have triggered the attention of local emergency planning authorities – most notably the sudden appearance of a large amount of ammonium nitrate in 2012.

"As a former HAZMAT coordinator, that would have been a red flag for me," said Haywood, referring to hazardous materials.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/texas-fertilizer-plant-stored-1350-times-the-amount-of-chemical-that-would-trigger-oversight/article11436704/>

USA, TX, BEAUMONT

APRIL 21 2013.

EXXON IDENTIFIES SOURCE OF REFINERY FLASH FIRE

Exxon Mobil released more information on Friday about a flash fire that injured 12 contract workers on Wednesday.

Exxon Mobil spokeswoman Kathleen Jackson said the fire started when hydrocarbons released from a heat exchanger ignited. The heat exchanger was connected to a catalytic desulfurization unit, or CHD, Jackson said in a prepared statement. The CHD unit, which was down for maintenance at the time of the fire, is used to remove sulfur from petroleum products, she said.

Jackson said the cause of the ignition and release of the hydrocarbons was not known as of Friday afternoon.

"The natural thing people want to know is what happened," she said. "This is factual information."

Twelve contract employees from three companies were injured in the fire.

Seven of those 12 workers were taken to the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston to be treated for severe burns

UTMB spokeswoman Molly Danninmaeir said Friday afternoon that one of the victims was expected to be released Friday afternoon. Four of the injured were still listed in critical condition Friday afternoon and two were listed in serious condition, she said.

The other injured workers were treated at local hospitals and released.

<http://fuelfix.com/blog/2013/04/19/exxon-identifies-source-of-refinery-flash-fire/>

ZIMBABWE, BULAWAYO

APRIL 21 2013.

NEGLIGENCE BLAMED FOR PETROL STATION BLAZE

The Bulawayo fire services department has blamed gross negligence for the fire which razed a petrol station in the city centre on Independence Day.

No one was however injured when the Redan Petroleum station, run by local businessman, Earnest Marima, exploded into a ball of fire destroying two fuel tankers.

Bulawayo council chief fire officer Richard Peterson said initial investigations had revealed that the mid-945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

afternoon blaze was caused by gross negligence.

"Our investigations show that there was gross negligence in terms of fire safety management. The people at the filling station did not adhere to fire safety regulations as they allowed welding activities to take place while fuel was being handled," said Peterson.

Marima said he was still trying to establish how much the blaze, which also destroyed part of the roof of the garage, had cost him.

"For now we are not sure how much was destroyed, we are still carrying out investigations to determine the value of property that was destroyed. Nothing indicates that the underground tanks were affected but we will have to confirm that," said Marima.

ZRP Bulawayo province spokesperson Inspector Mandlenkosi Moyo said police investigations were on-going.

"We have sealed off the area to protect the scene until investigations are complete. We are protecting the scene to ensure that evidence is not tampered with and that other departments can conduct their investigations without disturbances," he said.

The fire was reportedly started by sparks from a welding machine a few metres away which ignited the two tankers which were unloading fuel at the time .

Workers at the garage said one of the tankers was carrying 18,000 litres of petrol valued at US\$27,000 while the second truck reportedly had 5,000 litres of diesel valued at US\$75,000.

<http://www.newzimbabwe.com/NEWS-10882-Negligence+blamed+for+petrol+station+blaze/NEWS.aspx>

USA, CA, RICHMOND, APRIL 21 2013. FEDS RELEASE REFINERY FIRE INVESTIGATION VIDEO

Federal investigators released an animated video on Friday showing the events that led to a massive fire at Chevron's Richmond refinery last August, providing the clearest picture yet of the accident. The U.S. Chemical Safety Board released the video (<http://1.usa.gov/13ytf11>) ahead of a public meeting in Richmond where it will be shown on Friday evening. The video shows how Chevron's decision not to shut down production after a small pipe leak was detected led to a series of bad decisions that made the leak worse. In one scene, a company firefighter strikes the pipe with a pike pole while trying to help colleagues pinpoint the leak. A vapor cloud eventually engulfed 19 employees before the fire ignited. The workers escaped serious injury, but the cloud and fire created respiratory problems among residents for days. Both Chevron and government investigations have found that corrosion in the pipe caused the leak, and that Chevron failed to replace the 1970s-era pipe despite numerous warnings from its own inspectors. But the oil company issued a statement on Friday objecting to the video's release. Chevron said that by depicting the actions of specific workers it "has the effect, surely not intended, of demeaning the challenges faced by the responding personnel." The company also claims the eight-minute video contains inaccuracies, but did not specify what they were. The federal board routinely creates animated reenactments of incidents it investigates.

http://www.thecalifornian.com/article/20130420/NEWS06/304200033/Feds-release-refinery-fire-investigation-video?nclick_check=1

USA, N.J, BEDMINSTER

APRIL 21 2013.

1,450 GALLONS OF FUEL SPILLED FROM DOT YARD INTO RARITAN RIVER IN BEDMINSTER

Meghan D. Hodgin

Almost the entire amount of fuel in a tank spilled last week from a state Department of Transportation yard in Bedminster, resulting in 1,450 gallons of oil traveling through a storm drain and into the Raritan River, according to DOT officials.

It was previously estimated that about 1,500 gallons of fuel was in the 2,000-gallon fuel tank the morning of the spill, according to a state Department of Environmental Protection spokesman.

The DOT confirmed Friday that 1,450 gallons of the 1,500 estimated gallons of fuel was actually spilled that morning.

Bedminster Township Police responded April 11 between 7 and 7:30 a.m. to Klines Mill Road near River Road on a fuel odor report, according to Lt. Craig Meyer.

The fire department was dispatched to the area, along with the Somerset County Hazmat Team and the state DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife was notified of the leak, and was on site.

The leak was quickly contained, he said.

"Work continued until dark, and most of the product was recovered in the stream," he said. There was no sheen in the Raritan April 12, but crews worked to clean up a nearby wooded area, removing any additional pockets of

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

diesel fuel.

The nearest downstream water intake was notified by DEP as "a precaution," Considine said, although it was about 17 miles from the site of the spill.

http://www.nj.com/somerset/index.ssf/2013/04/dot_1450_gallons_of_fuel_spill.html

INDIA, CHENNAI

APRIL 24 2013.

2 DIE WHILE CLEANING TANK

1 OF THE MEN DIED OF ASPHYXIATION AND THE OTHER FELL WHILE TRYING TO RESCUE HIS COLLEAGUE

Shruti Marlecha

Two men were found dead inside a tank at a hotel on Greams Road off Anna Salai on Monday morning.

While one of the men died of asphyxiation, the other fell into the tank while attempting to save his colleague and died.

The two deceased were identified as Shekhar (45), a building contractor, and Robert (47), his employee. According to the police, four men went to the hotel for the regular cleaning of the tank.

According to Kanthavelu, inspector of Thousand Lights police, Shekhar and Robert have been in the business for the past three years. "Usually they open the lid of the tank in the night to release any gas collected and start disilting it in the morning. But this time as they were in a hurry, they went down inside the well directly without keeping the lid open," he said.

The tank was 40 feet deep and located on the hotel premises. At 5.30 a.m., Robert went inside the tank with his safety rope tied to a beam outside. The other three waited outside. Within five minutes, the other men heard Robert shouting for help. Hearing the screams, Shekhar attempted to descend using the same rope Robert had used. But, he slipped, fell into the tank and died. The cause of Robert's death was later established as asphyxiation.

As Shekhar and Robert failed to come out, the other two workers waiting outside tried to help, but it was too late. They contacted the Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services and they arrived at the spot at 7 a.m. The two bodies were taken to Royapettah Government hospital for post-mortem.

The manager of the hotel, Saravanan was arrested under Section 304 (A) of the IPC (causing death by negligence).

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/two-die-while-cleaning-tank/article4644626.ece>

USA, MI, DEXTER

APRIL 24 2013.

POLICE ID 48-YEAR-OLD JACKSON COUNTY MAN KILLED IN DEXTER TANK EXPLOSION

Kyle Feldscher

The Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office on Tuesday released the name of the 48-year-old Brooklyn, Mich. man who died Monday afternoon from injuries suffered in an explosion at the Dexter Utilities Department.

Michael Koch died at University of Michigan Hospital Monday afternoon. He was working on a concrete lid of a tank at the wastewater treatment plant when a welder's torch ignited methane gas and exploded.

Koch worked for Platinum Mechanical, Inc., a plumbing contractor out of Flint. A representative from the company declined comment when reached Tuesday morning.

"The demolition contractors were on site when the explosion occurred and it did kill one of our Local 190 employees," the representative said, before declining further comment out of respect for Koch's family.

Koch was working on the tank with David McBride, a 23-year-old Howell man. McBride was in stable condition after the blast Monday afternoon. The Dexter Area Fire Department was dispatched to the plant, 8360 Huron St., at 1:39 p.m. Monday after the explosion was reported.

McBride works for Regal Recycling. His condition was not clear Tuesday afternoon.

The explosion is not being investigated as a criminal incident, Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Geoffrey Fox said Tuesday. However, Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) officials are investigating.

Andrea Miller, communications representative for the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA), said the Construction Safety and Health Division initiated an investigation Monday into the explosion. She said the investigation into the explosion could take several weeks.

Miller said investigators will talk to police and fire representatives, along with witnesses about the incident before making the report.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

“The compliance officer will assess the physical information from the accident site, gather information related to the accident, take photos and measurements, conduct interviews and compile this information into a report,” she said in a statement.

MIOSHA is a division of LARA. The Construction Safety and Health Division is one of two enforcement divisions within MIOSHA.

Koch and McBride were working as a part of a \$3.3 million sludge handling improvement project that started in October, according to village officials. The concrete holding tank the men were working on collects sewer waste. The main contractor for the project is A.Z. Shmina, Inc.

Both men were in the tank at the time of the explosion. The force of the blast blew Koch out of the tank and other workers assisted McBride out. When firefighters arrived on scene, both men were on the roof of a nearby building.

Village of Dexter Manager Donna Dettling said the plant continues to operate and the village is waiting for the police and state investigations to wrap up to determine if it needs to do its own.

“I’m not sure what our attorneys are going to advise us on what we’re going to do, if we’ll do an investigation independent of the others,” she said, adding it was too early in the process to tell.

<http://www.annarbor.com/news/dexter/deputies-release-name-of-48-year-old-man-killed-in-dexter-explosion/>

USA, ID, MOUNTAIN HOME

APRIL 24 2013.

EMPTY TANK LEFT AT GAS STATION CAUSES EVACUATIONS IN MOUNTAIN HOME

A lot of questions remain after a tank for explosives was left at a gas station. Mountain Home Police says a fuel delivery guy was about to supply the Sinclair Station on Highway 30 and East 10th Street North. When he arrived, he found a contained marked "explosives" near the above ground storage fuel tanks. The Mountain Home Air Force Base and Boise Bomb squads responded and determined it was an empty container that holds explosives for an M1 tank. Sgt. Rick Viola of the Mountain Home Police Department says it appears the container was placed there deliberately, but officers don't know who or why it was placed there. Officials evacuated about a 2,500-foot area, which included several businesses. Police are continuing to investigate.

<http://www.kboi2.com/news/local/Empty-tank-left-at-gas-station-causes-evacuations-in-Mountain-Home-204373911.html>