

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

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

USA, WA, EDMONDS

APRIL 26 2009.

BACKYARD REFINERIES BLAMED FOR FIRES, EXPLOSIONS

Phuong Le

Trying to live green and beat high gasoline prices, some enterprising Americans are turning cooking oil into biodiesel in their garages. Problem is, some of these do-it-yourselfers are burning down the house.

Fire officials around the country are warning of the dangers and considering new restrictions to make sure people don't torch the whole neighborhood.

"You won't find a rule anywhere that says you can't cook biodiesel in your garage," said Bob Benedetti, a flammable-liquids engineer for the National Fire Protection Association in Quincy, Mass.

Ferocious fires and explosions blamed on backyard refining operations have been reported in Washington state, Arizona, Colorado, Massachusetts and Oregon. No deaths or serious injuries have resulted, but some fire officials say it is only a matter of time.

In recent years, many Americans have discovered that diesel cars can run on fuel made primarily from vegetable oil, and about the only drawback is a french fry smell. Some motorists are going so far as to brew their own fuel from used frying oil obtained from restaurants, which are often glad to get rid of the gunk for little or no charge.

Biodiesel is typically made by combining the cooking oil with methanol, or wood alcohol, in a mixture heated to about 120 degrees. But methanol is highly flammable. And frying oil, as any cook knows, can catch fire if it gets too hot or comes into contact with a flame.

The results can be spectacular, particularly in cases where home refiners have stockpiled tanks and barrels of material.

When a barn caught fire in 2006 outside Canby, Ore., "it was a huge column of black smoke unlike anything I'd ever seen in a typical fire," said Canby Fire Marshal Troy Buzalsky. "We had flames that scorched nearby 70-foot trees. It was so hot that it burned aluminum and sagged metal."

The blaze was caused by an electrical short, and the flames eventually ignited a 275-gallon plastic container of fuel.

"I took a lot of safety measures. It was pretty mind-blowing when I did have a fire," said Jeff Brandt, the barn's owner. He said he had even visited his local firehouse to let them know what he was doing. But the blaze hasn't discouraged Brandt from continuing to make fuel.

In Phoenix, officials may restrict residential biodiesel production to properties of one acre or more, Fire Chief Bob Kahn said.

"We're trying not to discourage people from doing it," Kahn said. But "when you're rendering in it in a garage in a family or neighborhood setting, you're exposing an awful lot of people to this potential hazard."

Setting up a home biodiesel operation is relatively easy. With hundreds of how-to guides posted online and kits for sale, enthusiasts can get started with less than \$500.

"It's a fun little hobby, like making your own beer," said Lyle Rudensey, who brews about 50 gallons per month in his Seattle garage to heat his home and run his car. "It's really kind of neat to go into your garage and fill up."

But in the classes he has taught for three years, Rudensey urges people to take precautions such as storing chemicals in metal cabinets and keeping fire extinguishers on hand. Similarly, Bill Carney, who gives workshops in

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Louisiana, said he tries to scare his students with horror stories and pictures of fires.

In the Phoenix suburb of Surprise, fumes from chemicals used to make biodiesel caused an explosion and fire at a home in August. In Colorado in 2006, a homeowner who was processing a tank of homemade biodiesel forgot to turn off the heating element, and a fire burned the surrounding shed and equipment. Investigators found seven 55-gallon barrels of methanol and other hazardous materials.

In Monroe, not far from Seattle, chemical vapors caused an explosion last April in an attached garage where a homeowner was brewing biodiesel. Firefighters put out the fire before it caused serious damage. In December, a biodiesel blaze broke out in a shed in Edmonds, a Seattle suburb, and quickly destroyed the owner's house.

Edmonds Fire Chief Thomas Tomberg said he wants to see a code that tells home-brewers what they can and cannot do.

In Northborough, Mass., a biodiesel fire in 2007 destroyed a home and caused about \$350,000 in damage, Fire Chief David Durgin said. The homeowner had served in Iraq and wanted to stop relying on foreign oil.

"They got out with the clothes on their backs and their lives," Durgin said. But he added: "Somebody ultimately will have a fire, burn their homes, be injured or killed by this."

http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5h9o6mtvYqvF8_TuXZCSKOqqB5dfgD97NS4LG0

USA, SC, MYRTLE BEACH

APRIL 26 2009.

GAS MIXED WITH DIESEL IN SC TANK BEFORE EXPLOSION

Orangeburg County deputies say gasoline was mixed with diesel fuel in a tank that exploded earlier this month, killing two men. Sheriff Larry Williams told The Times and Democrat of Orangeburg that investigators are trying to figure out how the much more volatile gasoline got into the diesel tank.

The explosion happened Monday as three people tried to fill a logging truck with fuel at a Norway home. Authorities say the men were using a homemade fuel pump system powered by jumper cables connected to the truck's batteries when one of them opened the tank's cap.

The survivor told investigators he saw a blue flame shoot up and the tank exploded.

Williams says deputies may never know how much gasoline was mixed with the diesel fuel.

<http://www.thesunnews.com/575/story/875316.html>

USA, FLA, BARTOW

APRIL 27 2009.

ETHANOL TANK EXPLOSION IN BARTOW

An ethanol tank explosion at Bartow Ethanol Florida, has led to the plant being closed until further investigation. The explosion was in a 50,000-gallon tank that contained about 1,000 gallons of food-grade ethanol, said David Wyant, a spokesman for the Bartow Police Department.

The fire following the explosion forced the evacuation of employees at Bartow Ethanol and at three other nearby companies - Peace River Citrus Products, Commercial Cold Storage and Orange Cogen. The fire caused extensive damage to the south side of the Bartow Ethanol Inc. building, Wyant said. Officials with the state Fire Marshal's Office are investigating the cause of the tank explosion.

http://www.biofuels-news.com/industry_news.php?item_id=754

USA, TX, SEGUIN

APRIL 28 2009.

LIGHTNING STRIKE STARTS OIL TANK FIRE

Jessica Sanders

Lightning lit up more than the sky Monday afternoon.

During the recent rain and electrical storms, a strike of lightning started a blaze on an oil field just south of Kingsbury.

Around 3 p.m., Kingsbury Volunteer Fire Department and the Luling Fire Department were called out to a oil fire off of FM 1150 about five miles south of Kingsbury.

Johnny Smith, KVFD safety officer, said lightning apparently struck an oil container, causing it to erupt into flames.

While the downpour continued to soak the ground, fire crews were left waiting, Smith said.

"The oil has been cut off to it," he said. "They are just going to let it burn out, it's all contained in the berm. It

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makes the clean-up easier.”

KVFD Assistant Fire Chief David Weathers said even though the smoke contained poisonous fumes, residents were not required to leave their homes.

“It may be voluntary because of the smoke, but nobody is going to come around and tell you need to leave,” Weathers said. “It’s crude oil, it’s preferable not to breathe it.”

Smith agreed that, though evacuations were not called, it would be wise to avoid the smoke.

“It’s got hydrocarbons in it,” he said. “It would be better not to breathe it, if you can help it.”

Lightning strikes in the oil fields are not as uncommon as they may seem, Weathers said.

“We had it twice last year,” he said.

National Weather Service Meteorologist Chris Morris said no other areas were affected by the electricity the storm was releasing.

“The storms were producing some lightning strikes, but there were no reports of lightning damage,” he said.

The storms dumped various amounts of precipitation through out the area, Morris said.

“There was one report for 2.21 inches of rainfall in Guadalupe County six miles southeast of New Berlin,” he said. “The observer said within one hour and 45 minutes he received 1.61 inches. Here at the New Braunfels Airport, we received 1.54 inches of rain since midnight.”

After this line of storms, the area can look for a break throughout the rest of the week from any more bad weather, Morris said.

“Pretty much for the rest of the week we are looking at 10-20 percent chance of rain, with 20 percent on Wednesday and then for the rest of the week we are looking pretty dry,” he said. “Not much in the way of rainfall with those chances, if we do get some rain it will be a couple hundredths of an inch, but not much.”

<http://www.seguingazette.com/story.lasso?ewcd=62172de09664703f>

USA, PA, MONTROSE

APRIL 29 2009.

DEP REINVESTIGATING FUEL SPILL

Michael J. Rudolf

The state Department of Environmental Protection plans to re-visit the site of a fuel spill from last year that still hasn't been cleaned up.

DEP spokesperson Mark Carmon said the agency first investigated the spill in South Auburn on Dec. 10, 2008. Carmon said the report does not list the date the spill happened or was reported, but it was almost certainly within a day or two before DEP's Sean Haggerty went to the scene.

According to Carmon, about 200 gallons of fuel oil leaked from an above-ground storage tank at a mobile home at the Harvey residence, in South Auburn.

The spill contaminated the ground under the home, Carmon said. He added that the resident was instructed to have the spill cleaned up and the contaminated soil removed.

DEP records show that work has not been done, Carmon said.

Another DEP inspection is scheduled to address the site sometime this week and contact the resident to determine the status of the situation.

Carmon said DEP can't clean up the site on its own.

"We don't have the funds to do it ourselves," he said.

The site also does not qualify for an emergency contract, because it is confined to the area under the home, and is not affecting any wells or waterways. If it did, Carmon said, the state would hire someone to clean it up then bill the resident and/or the property owner.

Carmon would not speculate as to what could happen if the spill and contaminated soil still isn't cleaned up following the next inspection.

"I'm going to let our people take a look at it and let them make a judgment," he said.

http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=20305762&BRD=2279&PAG=461&dept_id=467076&rfi=6

USA, OK, DEL CITY

APRIL 30 2009.

OIL SPILL CONTAINED IN DEL CITY CREEK

Emergency workers responded to an oil spill this morning in the 3300 block of SE 29. The spill was caused by a storage tank drainage valve that was accidentally left open in a containment pit, Del City Fire Department spokesman

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Brandon Pursell said. Heavy rainfall caused the oil to drain into Cherry Creek. Environmental and city crews managed to contain the spill, Pursell said. The incident did not affect traffic, and officials are determining how many gallons of oil were spilled. The storage tank is owned by New Dominion LLC.

<http://www.istockanalyst.com/article/viewiStockNews/articleid/3211920>

USA, ILL, CHICAGO, SOUTH HOLLAND

APRIL 30 3009.

HAZMAT SPILL AT UPS FACILITY IN SOUTH HOLLAND INJURES NINE WORKERS

Nine workers at a UPS facility in south suburban South Holland received medical treatment Wednesday after a drum containing hazardous materials was punctured on a loading dock.

About 10:30 a.m., employees of the United Parcel Service Freight facility at 601 W. 172nd St. in South Holland grew ill after puncturing a "small drum" containing hazardous materials while unloading it on the dock, UPS spokesman Ira Rosenfeld said. The puncture caused "fumes," prompting a HazMat situation.

The nine workers complained of nausea and eye irritation after coming into contact with the fumes, and were treated and released from a local urgent care clinic, Rosenfeld said. No other injuries were reported.

The South Holland Fire Department responded and requested an MABAS HazMat team after discovering that about 5 gallons of a combustible and corrosive substance had leaked from the drum, according to a release from the department. The dock area was evacuated for about two hours, when about 24 people were on the premises, Rosenfeld said.

The facility is open 24 hours a day and can have up to 400 people working, but most were making deliveries or were elsewhere when the spill happened. Neither Rosenfeld, nor the fire department could confirm what chemical was in the drum, but both said everything was cleaned up and back to normal Wednesday afternoon.

<http://www.suntimes.com/news/metro/1550590,w-hazmat-ups-facility-south-holland-042909.article>

USA, CA, MARTINEZ

APRIL 30 2009.

REFINERY WORKER'S BODY FOUND AFTER A DAY'S SEARCH

Peter Fimrite

It isn't every day that someone vanishes at the Shell refinery in Martinez, where employees have badges, roll call is regularly held and security is so tight that a strict accounting is made of all workers at the plant during shift changes.

Which is why Bill Maddock's disappearance during his overnight shift was so strange.

A supervisor with more than 20 years experience in the refinery's logistics department, Maddock went to work as scheduled at 6 p.m. Tuesday, said Shell spokeswoman Teresa Makarewicz. But at 6 a.m. Wednesday when he was supposed to clock out, he was nowhere to be found.

Security crews, the Contra Costa County Sheriff's search and rescue team and tracking dogs searched every nook and cranny of the 1,000 acre-plant but found nothing. Then, at 11:22 p.m., the mystery was unraveled: His body was found inside a water-holding tank.

Now, Martinez police are investigating the death and trying to find out how Maddock ended up inside the tank.

Maddock, who was in his mid-50s, was primarily responsible for the blending of materials, which involves movement of gasoline, diesel and other products from one tank to another.

He was last seen between 2:30 a.m. and 3 a.m. talking to another employee about a routine operational matter, Makarewicz said.

Earlier Wednesday evening, Makarewicz said it was possible Maddock could have fallen into one of the tanks.

"We're not ruling that out but we don't want to speculate," she had said. "I don't want to just focus on the tanks. We have many acres out here."

The Martinez refinery employs more than 700 people to operate the plant, which converts up to 165,000 barrels of crude oil a day into automotive gasoline, jet fuel, diesel, petroleum coke, industrial fuel oils, liquefied petroleum gas, asphalt, and sulfur.

Employees use an electronic badge system to sign in and out of the site and Maddock had not signed out. When he was unaccounted for Wednesday morning - and when he failed to return home, the search began.

The grounds of the refinery had been searched multiple times before his body was found in the tank.

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/04/30/BAR617C1HS.DTL>

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NEW ZEALAND, WELLINGTON

APRIL 30 2009.

TAIHAPE DIESEL SPILL

Environmental protection officers from Horizons Regional Council responded swiftly to a report of a diesel spill at a Taihape property yesterday morning.

NZ Police contacted the council while they were investigating a vandalism incident at a Mataroa Road address owned by Peter Stratton. The offenders had interfered with contracting equipment and using a 35-tonne digger turned a mobile fuel tank upside down spilling diesel down the bank of the Namunui Stream.

Rebecca Fryett from Horizons was one of four response officers who worked on managing the diesel spill yesterday. She said it was fortunate that the council was alerted early and the diesel was prevented from getting into the Hautapu River.

"Fortunately only about 200 litres of diesel had spilt from the upturned tank before the damage was found and the leak was blocked. We were lucky we got there before the heavy rain, because if the river was up the diesel could have flowed downstream pretty quickly. Mr Stratton's contractor did a good job taking out a lot of the diesel and contaminated soil himself using the front bucket of the digger. Once we were there we put four sorbent booms across the stream and were also able to remove some of the diesel by hand."

Sorbent booms are made from a material which floats on top of the water and soaks up hydrocarbons. Booms were put into the Namunui Stream on the Stratton property as well in the area where the stream enters the upper Hautapu River.

Environmental Protection Manager Alison Russell said the Hautapu is a local water conservation river and its brown trout fishery is of regional significance.

"Events like diesel spills are taken very seriously and since the Hautapu is a pristine river it was critical for us to control the situation yesterday. I was impressed with the speed at which our staff in Palmerston North and Taihape got to the property and started work on containing the spill."

Mr Stratton said he was also impressed with the response from Horizons. "They were here quickly and they did a great job to make sure the diesel didn't flow downstream. It is pretty lucky that the tank wasn't full, but there is still quite a bit of diesel on the ground which will seep into the stream so the booms are still in the water to suck the diesel up." Horizons will monitor the Namunui Stream for adverse environmental effects.

<http://www.voxy.co.nz/national/taihape-diesel-spill/5/13036>

USA, NJ, DOVER

MAY 1 2009.

SPARKS FLY, TANK EXPLODES, OIL SPILLS AT DOVER GAS STATION'S AUTO SHOP EMPLOYEES PUT OUT FIRE AFTER MISHAP WITH WHIZZER WHEEL

A mechanic working at the auto shop at the Spartan gas station on West Clinton Street triggered an explosion inside the garage Wednesday afternoon when sparks flew from his air-powered cutting tool and ignited vapors in a waste oil tank, authorities said.

No one was injured in the 12:40 p.m. blast, which blew out the side windows of Raymon Auto Repair connected to the station, and spilled approximately 200 gallons of recycled oil, authorities said.

The explosion sparked a small fire, which was extinguished by garage employees with a fire extinguisher, authorities said. Dover and Picatinny firefighters put out the remainder of the fire, officials said.

"There was just a rag or something that was smoldering and we used about a quart of water to put it out," said Dover Fire Chief Paul McDougall.

Morris County Hazmat and Picatinny Hazmat crews also responded to monitor the spill, which was about "98 percent" contained to the two-car garage, said William Charlton, supervisor of Morris County Hazmat.

The used oil tank, a Safety Kleen brand described as a free-standing, metal cube-shaped container, was blown apart in the explosion. Charlton said.

He said the mechanic was using a tool known as a whizzer wheel to cut apart a bearing for a vehicle when the blast occurred.

In addition to the damaged windows, the blast caused minor damage to both vehicles parked in the shop to be serviced, said Dover Fire Capt. Scott Warner.

The vehicles -- a BMW and Ford Taurus -- sustained smoke damage and were covered with oil, he said. Damage estimates were not available on Wednesday.

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It was unclear if the owners of the vehicles were notified of the incident. Raymon Auto manager Jorge Cuzunaga, who rents the space from Spartan Oil, declined to comment.

A woman who answered the phone at Spartan Oil Company, based on Sammis Avenue in Dover, also declined to comment shortly after 4 p.m.

A private contractor was hired by Spartan Oil to clean up the spill, the Morris County Prosecutor's Office said. McDougall said the Department of Environmental Protection was also notified of the spill.

The incident remained under investigation on Wednesday afternoon, according to the Occupational Safety Hazard Administration. OSHA officials said Raymon Auto recently opened as an extension of the station.

Carol Hammell, assistant area director for OSHA, said it was too early to comment on the investigation.

"I know they were cutting but that's as far as I know," Hammell said.

About an hour after the explosion, local and county officials were still gathered at the site, located at the intersection of West Clinton, or Route 15, and Richboynnton Road. OSHA officials sized up the damage, taking photos and notes about the incident.

Inside the garage, the BMW had its tires completely submerged in the spill, while the Taurus on the right-hand side fared better. A generous amount of oil was splattered across both vehicles, but oil pooled only in the left side of the garage.

Motorists on the main thoroughfare leading to downtown Dover slowed to take in the scene, but traffic was not affected by the commotion. Raymon Auto was shut down for the remainder of the day but the station remained open for business.

<http://www.dailyrecord.com/article/20090430/COMMUNITIES13/904300310/1344/NEWS14>

USA, MI, WATERFORD TWP

MAY 1 2009.

EXPLOSION KILLS MAN IN WATERFORD

An accident at a Waterford gas station killed a man on Thursday.

Waterford Township Police say workers were working in an underground facility at a Sunoco Station near Williams Lake Road and Airport Road when the explosion happened.

The man killed was a contract worker who was trying to open an underground gasoline storage tank.

Fumes ignited the explosion.

Investigators believe a spark from the cutting instrument ignited gasoline fumes about 1 p.m. Thursday.

The man was blown from the hole. No one else was injured.

Investigators are having difficulty getting details because of a "language barrier" with other workers who do not speak English. He is not sure what language they speak, and police were trying to find an interpreter.

<http://www.wxyz.com/news/local/story/Explosion-Kills-Man-in-Waterford/7ZB5JUJ3uEmJvQSt2QB8Ww.csp>

USA, PA, BRADFORD

MAY 1 2009.

FATHER PLEADS IN PA. OIL TANK VANDALISM CASE

A northwestern Pennsylvania man has pleaded guilty to conspiring to cause an oil spill in the Allegheny National Forest because he was upset with his former employer. Forty-three-year-old Andrew Horton, of Bradford, acknowledges dropping off his son, 22-year-old Christopher Horton, to vandalize the company's oil storage tanks in August. McKean County prosecutors say Horton's son opened tank valves spilling 46,000 gallons of oil, fouling a nearby stream and killing fish and other wildlife. Andrew Horton, an avid fisherman, says he cried when he learned of the extent of the damage. Horton's attorney says his client didn't realize how much the environment would be harmed. Andrew Horton will be sentenced July 1. His son is awaiting trial.

http://www.philly.com/philly/wires/ap/news/state/pennsylvania/20090430_ap_fatherpleadsinpaoiltankvandalismcase.html

USA, KS, ARKANSAS CITY

MAY 3 2009.

LIGHTNING IGNITES OIL TANKS

David Allen Seaton

Four oil tank batteries were destroyed by a raging fire Friday caused by a lightning strike.

The fire resulted in about \$65,000 in property damage, fire officials said.

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The fire occurred around noon north of Strother Field along 61st Road. Firefighters from Winfield and Ark City fought rain and mud to douse the flames with foam.

"There was a tremendous amount of fire and large black plume of smoke," said Winfield fire Capt. Darryl Littrell, but "there really wasn't any danger to any other properties."

The tanks were in a field owned by Darrell Long, of Winfield; the equipment belonged to the W.D. Short Oil Company out of Oxford, Littrell said.

All four tanks - two made of fiberglass and two made of steel - were destroyed, as was a water pump. The tanks were valued at \$40,000; the pump at \$20,000-25,000.

Not much oil was lost because the tanks were not full and firefighters were able to shut off the pumps to the tanks, Littrell added.

Firefighters suspect that the lightning struck a steel tank with a mixture of salt water and oil. It ignited and the mixture spilled onto the ground and into a bern built to capture oil spills.

"Initially, we just had to kind of stay back and let it burn a little bit, and then we foamed it to extinguish the fire." Littrell said.

They found debris from the tanks 40 to 50 yards away, thrown by the force of the lightning, he added.

http://www.arkcity.net/stories/050209/com_0004.shtml

USA, FLA, TAMPA

MAY 3 2009.

BOATERS FUMING OVER ETHANOL IN GASOLINE

Russell Ray

Linda Mulder and her husband, Ronald, were boating on the Homosassa River recently when their boat started to sputter.

"We were having a hard time accelerating," Linda Mulder said.

After consulting a mechanic and examining the engine, the Palm Harbor couple discovered that the inner lining of their fuel line was falling apart. The line was clogged and the fuel filter was filled with pieces of the corroded hose.

"It wasn't letting the engine get the fuel," she said.

The Mulders contend they were victims of gasoline blended with ethanol, a mix wreaking havoc for boat owners nationwide.

Ethanol-blended fuel is served at thousands of Florida gas stations and will be mandatory by the end of 2010 thanks to a new state law approved last year.

Kevin Campbell, owner of Outboard Motor Services in Tampa, said clogged fuel lines, crumbling gas tanks and malfunctions of all sorts have increased since the petroleum industry introduced E10, a blend of 10 percent ethanol and 90 percent gasoline, to Florida consumers a year and a half ago.

"Every day I have a new customer come in with the ethanol problem," Campbell said. "I've seen it so many times."

Ethanol is creating thousands of dollars in repairs for boat owners who were caught off guard by the potential damage ethanol can do to boat engines, Campbell said. And their warranty, in many cases, won't cover damage caused by what manufacturers classify as contaminated fuel.

"If you have an ethanol problem and it eats up all your fuel lines, some of these manufacturers are voiding your warranty," Campbell said.

The situation has led several boat owners in Florida to sue the major oil companies.

But E10 works just fine in most boat engines - as long as the engines are used regularly.

The separation factor

The problem is that most boats sit for long periods of time without use. When ethanol-blended fuels sit in a gas tank for a long time, the ethanol begins to separate from the gasoline.

When engines consume pure ethanol, a highly corrosive solvent, the results can be disastrous. In addition to unraveling fuel lines, it can loosen sludge, varnish and dirt inside the gas tank, causing fuel lines and carburetors to clog.

Ethanol eats away at the fuel line, causing it to fail like a collapsing tunnel, Campbell said. "I have a few customers that have brand-new engines and it's actually eaten up the fuel lines completely," he said.

Also, ethanol prefers water over gasoline. If water is in the boat's gas tank, the ethanol will separate from the gasoline and bond with the water.

That means boaters could end up pumping a mixture of ethanol and water into their engine. If that happens,

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the boat could stall.

Most experts say it takes 60 to 90 days for ethanol to start separating from gasoline. But that's not always the case.

"I've seen it in 30 days," Campbell said.

Most older boats are equipped with fiberglass gas tanks, which ethanol can harm. "It will break down the fiberglass material and turn it into a gel and just dissolve the tank," Campbell said.

Those with older boats should consider replacing their fiberglass tank with aluminum or plastic, he said. Replacement costs, however, can exceed \$1,000.

At a minimal cost, boat owners can protect their engines by installing fuel lines that are more resistant to ethanol and by using gasoline additives that help prevent the separation of ethanol and water from gasoline.

Matt Hartwig, spokesman for the Renewable Fuels Association, said the boating industry's claims about ethanol have been greatly exaggerated.

"Ethanol has become a convenient scapegoat for any issue relating to marine engines of late," Hartwig said. "The fact is that most boats on the water can handle ethanol blends, especially when marinas and owners take the proper precautions."

Cars and trucks are better equipped to handle ethanol. What's more, cars and trucks are used more frequently, which means the ethanol is not given a chance to separate from the gasoline.

Boat owners, Campbell said, are blaming the federal government for increasing the use of ethanol in gasoline without warning the public of the potential effects.

Is a higher blend on the way?

As boat owners pay for costly repairs caused by ethanol, the ethanol industry and its agricultural allies are trying to increase the use of ethanol in gasoline from 10 percent to 15 percent. The nation's \$40 billion boating industry is trying to block that effort.

"Any ethanol blend above 10 percent poses significant durability, performance and safety risks for boating consumers," said Mat Dunn, legislative director for the National Marine Manufacturers Association.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is expected to decide before year's end whether to grant the ethanol industry's request for higher ethanol blends.

Any blend above 10 percent would make boats and chain saws run hotter and faster, Dunn said.

"You're talking about a huge number of products that could be impacted negatively by E15," he said. "Our major concern is that the federal government is going to make a hasty and ill-informed decision and bring all of those products out of compliance or cause performance problems."

The nation's boating industry accounts for 154,000 jobs, including 30,000 in Florida. Of the nation's 13 million registered boats, about 1 million are in the Sunshine State.

The ethanol industry, however, says ethanol is a cleaner-burning fuel that will reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Under a new state law passed last year, all gasoline sold in Florida must contain 10 percent ethanol by the end of 2010.

<http://www2.tbo.com/content/2009/may/03/bz-boaters-fuming-over-ethanol-in-gasoline/news-money/>

AUSTRALIA, BRISBANE

MAY 1 2009.

MAN HURT IN FUEL TANK BLAST

Marissa Calligeros

A man is in a critical hospital after a fuel tank exploded at an industrial yard in the Western Darling Downs yesterday afternoon. The 55-year-old man suffered chest and leg injuries after the fuel tank, which was empty at the time, exploded in the yard on the Leichardt Highway at Miles, north-west of Chinchilla, about 1pm. It is understood the man was injured by shards of metal sent flying in the explosion. The man was treated at Miles Hospital before being airlifted to the Mater Hospital, where he remains in a serious but stable condition.

<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/qld-news/man-hurt-in-fuel-tank-blast-20090430-anm1.html>

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

USA, AKA, ANCHORAGE

MAY 4 2009.

REFINERY IN SHADOW OF ERUPTING VOLCANO

A BAD ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION 40 YEARS AGO HAS ALASKA IN A QUANDARY

Richard Mauer

When Mount Redoubt began erupting in March, the nearby Drift River oil terminal suddenly emerged from the obscurity of a low-key industrial facility to the potential source of an environmental disaster on the scale of the Exxon Valdez.

And with its place in the spotlight came an obvious question: How could such a hazardous facility have been built there, just 22 miles -- 35 kilometres -- from Redoubt's cone?

"That is the most consistent question I hear on the street," said Bob Shavelson, executive director of the environmental watchdog group Cook Inletkeeper. "The everyday, walking around person scratches their head when they hear there's an oil terminal at the base of an active volcano."

The precise details of why it's there are lost in the haze of history. The current owners, Chevron-managed Cook Inlet Pipe Line Co., say they inherited the facility in 2005 when Chevron bought out Unocal, the prior operator, and don't know its full history. State records show that officials from Mobil, one of Cook Inlet Pipe Line's original owners, initiated the purchase and lease of two state land parcels for the terminal in early 1966. A workaday storage and transit facility for crude oil, tiny by comparison with industrial monsters like the Valdez terminal and accessible only by air or boat, Drift River usually operates with routine monotony. The oil comes in from platforms in Cook Inlet. The oil goes out in the hulls of tankers.

State records show it received its first permits in 1966 and was licensed to operate in 1967, but there's no record of a public discussion of the facility. The state file of its 55-year tidelands lease to Cook Inlet Pipe Line has not a single word justifying the use of that particular site. The modern environmental movement was just dawning then, and it would be three years before president Richard Nixon would sign the National Environmental Policy Act with its requirement for a detailed impact statement -- including alternatives -- on projects like Drift River.

Kevin Banks, director of the state's Oil & Gas Division, said the question of why the oil terminal was built at the foot of an active volcano has been the talk of his office too. While the risks are now obvious, it's easy to see the advantages of Drift River, he said. The land there is flat, the beach heads straight into the inlet, then drops off. The Christy Lee platform, a loading dock a mile offshore in deep water, connects to the terminal by pipeline.

"You have to go miles (offshore) before it drops off -- everywhere except at Drift River," Banks said.

Walt Parker, a retired state transportation and oil official, said Drift River "was the first place they could get reasonable size tankers into" going south from the oil fields.

John Norman, a member of the Alaska Oil & Gas Conservation Commission with long involvement in the industry as an attorney, said that in the 1960s the state was so hungry for economic development that it sometimes accepted projects without question.

State land records show Cook Inlet Pipe Line bought 898 acres for the terminal for \$36,000 on April 26, 1966. A separate lease governing 392 acres of adjacent tidelands for access and pipelines initially cost the company \$500 a year when it was signed June 13, 1966. The current annual rent is \$5,750. The lease expires in 2021.

At the time of its charter in 1966, the Cook Inlet Pipe Line was owned by Mobil, Unocal, Marathon and Atlantic Richfield.

Larry Smith, a long-term Homer activist who served on the federally chartered Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Committee when it was founded after the Exxon Valdez spill, said the Drift River terminal completely escaped his notice when it was built.

"There weren't any questions about it," he said.

Now that the terminal is in place and the Cook Inlet oil fields are in decline, it would be uneconomical to relocate the facility, said Santana Gonzalez, a spokesman for Cook Inlet Pipe Line Co.

"Several options are being studied but we cannot get into that at this time," he said in an e-mail message.

Petty Officer Sara Francis, spokeswoman for the Coast Guard, one of the facility's regulators, said the owners are considering a workaround that would keep it open but would dismantle the current tanks. In their place would be a new tank and pumping system that could empty the tanks quickly in an emergency, she said.

Now, the pump intakes are above the bottom of the tanks and there's no easy way to drain them dry.

When the Cook Inlet fields were in their prime in the 1970s, tankers would call at Christy Lee every other day. They'd sometimes be backed up in the lower Inlet for a chance to load. With production outstripping the capacity of local refineries, they'd frequently haul their cargo to the Lower 48 and sometimes to Asia.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Now a tanker arrives about once a month and delivers the oil a few miles away at Nikiski, where it accounts for about one-fourth of the crude refined there by Tesoro.

Or did.

Since March 23, when workers hastily retreated as a gush of cementlike mud and water boiled down from Redoubt's flanks, Drift River oil terminal has ceased normal operations.

Francis, the Coast Guard spokeswoman, said it could be months before Drift River reopens.

And Redoubt is still capable of exploding unpredictably over the next months.

"They're not focusing on moving oil," Francis said. "They're focusing on removing the (stored oil) while it continues to be in the shadow of an erupting volcano."

That Redoubt is an active volcano should come as no surprise to anyone paying attention. Capt. James Cook, for whom the Inlet is named, noticed "white smoke but no fire" coming from Redoubt in 1778. Over the course of written history, geologists say it is the second-most active of Cook Inlet's four active volcanoes.

Redoubt exploded at 9:47 a.m. on Dec. 14, 1989. It exploded 22 more times until it began to quiet in late April 1990.

More than 37 million gallons of crude was in storage at Drift River tim at the time -- three times the amount of oil spilled from the tanker Exxon Valdez in early 1989. The Drift River shifted from one channel and into another, demonstrating how unpredictable it can be. Mudflows inundated the tank farm, but the tanks didn't leak.

The terminal closed and oil production halted in Cook Inlet. In response, Cook Inlet Pipe Line Co. built a concrete- armored dike around the facility. Construction of the nearly two-mile wall began April 9, 1990, and concluded that August.

When Redoubt, with its then untested dike, began to rumble in January, scientists at the Alaska Volcano Observatory warned an eruption was possible. Shavelson, of Cook Inletkeeper, asked Cook Inlet Pipe Line, the Coast Guard and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation for a report on the amount of oil stored. That number would tell whether nearby clean-up equipment was up to the task, he said.

He was told the information was a homeland security secret. Reporters got the same response.

Shavelson said he suspected the company just didn't want to reveal the risks to the public. It wasn't until the eruption started and the facility was abandoned out of fears for worker safety that Cook Inlet Pipe Line disclosed the tanks held 6.2 million gallons.

There's evidence to support Shavelson's suspicion that the company's concern about disclosure wasn't out of fear of terrorist attack. Despite the dangerous levels of oil in its tanks, the facility didn't have a single closed-circuit camera to monitor what was happening after the workers left. Francis, the coast guard spokeswoman, said cameras were finally installed two weeks ago.

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/world/Refinery-in-shadow-of-erupting-volcano-44258107.html>

USA, OH, WEST CARROLLTON

MAY 5 2009.

CHEMICAL PLANT EXPLOSION: WHAT WENT WRONG?

OEPA PROBES FOR CAUSE OF EXPLOSION AT VEOLIA ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PLANT

The explosion that triggered a raging fire at the Veolia Environmental Services plant early Monday, May 4, has been ruled accidental, according to a release from the State Fire Marshal's office and the city of West Carrollton.

The release said investigators for the city, the fire marshal's office and other state and federal authorities "found no evidence of criminal intent during their investigation."

The release said a leak of ignitable liquid, possibly acetone or Tetrahydrofuran, came in contact with gas-fired boilers in or around a laboratory building on the site at 4301 Infirmary Road in West Carrollton.

The resulting explosion flung debris up to a quarter mile from the site of the blast, the release said.

Officials with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, the fire marshal's office, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration and the company today are expected to continue working to determine whether there will be any lingering environmental effects. Early indications, though, were that the area surrounding the plant site remains safe.

According to West Carrollton Fire Chief Jack Keister, six employees were transferring solvents from one tank to another when they noticed a leak. Somehow, the leaking fumes ignited and exploded about midnight in an area of storage tanks behind a laboratory building at the plant on Infirmary Road.

One worker suffered first- and second-degree burns and another suffered a leg injury, Keister said.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

The release said the man with the leg injury was treated at a local hospital on Monday and was later released. Of the man with the leg injury, Keister said, "At first we thought he was deceased. He came walking out of the woods about three hours into the fire."

Nancy Thickett, a spokeswoman for Premier Health Partners, said the other worker was in the Miami Valley Hospital burn unit Monday. She didn't have a name or information on his condition.

The release said the two men had the only injuries that were reported to the fire department and the fire marshal's office.

Businesses and home owners near the Veolia site were assessing damages on Tuesday morning in the wake of the explosion that rattled windows and knocked photos off walls a mile away.

Doug Wagner, operations manager of Moody's of Dayton, a water well contracting company immediately south of Veolia, said no one was on his site when the blast went off.

But the shock wave from the explosion twisted two 15-foot-high metal garage doors at the rear of the Moody's building like taffy. "We got off pretty easy," Wagner said.

Elsewhere along Infirmary Road plywood was nailed over house windows, and broken ceiling tiles were piled in a bin in front of one building.

Brian Marlatt, an environmental specialist on hazardous materials for the Ohio EPA's Dayton office, said Monday that he'll investigate the cause of the explosion, the "full nature and extent" of any chemical releases, and whether there were any violations or negligence involved.

Veolia Environmental Services was groping for answers on Monday as to what caused the explosion and fire that alarmed neighbors for miles.

"We are still investigating exactly why the explosion occurred. Preliminary indications are that it was related to the recycling of a solvent material," the company said in a prepared statement.

Jim Dykhuis, a Veolia spokesman who referred questions to plant manager Darek Teeters, said, "I don't want to speculate, but you're dealing with flammable materials here."

On Tuesday morning, Teeters told a representative of the Dayton Daily News that he would not comment on the accident or related issues until later.

According to the Occupational Safety & Health Administration, Tetrahydrofuran is a highly flammable solvent used in industrial processes such as producing polyvinyl chloride films and adhesives. Tetrahydrofuran is a central nervous system depressant in humans and may cause irritation of the mucous membranes and upper respiratory tract and liver and kidney damage.

Acetone also is highly flammable and can be an irritant, according to the Ohio EPA. It is a solvent used in common products such as nail polish remover. In industrial settings, it's used in the manufacture of plastics, fibers, drugs, and other chemicals.

The Labor Department's OSHA has officials on the scene, spokesman Brad Mitchell of Chicago said Monday.

"We have had no complaints, no issues at the site, either under the (previous) Onyx name or the current owners," Mitchell said.

While Veolia has had a few minor violations with the Ohio EPA, Marlatt said, "this is a facility that manages its wastes properly. They're not bad actors."

The company is in the process of voluntarily remediating some contamination left over from a 1986 spill of 2,800 gallons of recycled paint thinner, Marlatt said. The spill occurred under the stewardship of a previous owner, Chemical Waste Management Resource Recovery, he said.

Because of the remediation effort, there are groundwater monitors in place on the plant grounds that can be used to assess any new contamination from the explosion, Marlatt said.

He said he will ask company officials for the truck manifests to see what kinds of hazardous materials were on site at the time of the explosion. Veolia has a permit to handle a large array of dangerous chemicals, some of which are flammable.

<http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/dayton-news/chemical-plant-explosion-what-went-wrong-106975.html>

USA, OH, DAYTON

MAY 6 2009.

EXPLOSION RULED ACCIDENTAL, RESULT OF IGNITABLE LIQUID

James Cummings

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Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

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Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

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<http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/dayton-news/explosion-ruled-accidental-result-of-ignitable-liquid-106975.html>

AUSTRALIA, VICTORIA, BALLARAT

MAY 6 2009.

MAN WORKING ON LPG TANK DIES AFTER TANK STARTS LEAKING

UPDATE 11.10am: TWO men pulled another man from a pit full of LPG fumes this morning and tried desperately to resuscitate him.

The 34-year-old Berwick man had been working on an underground gas tank at the United Service Station in Ballarat early this morning when it began leaking.

It is believed the man was overcome by fumes leaking from the 16,000 litre tank, which had about 9000 litres of LPG in it.

Matthew Walsh said he had stopped at the service station on Macarthur St to buy the paper when a friend ran inside the store and shouted for someone to call an ambulance.

Mr Walsh said he ran outside to help his friend and found the man lying face down in the pit.

"The gas was just fuming out of this pit in the ground. One side of me was worried about the gas and the other side was worried about the guy," he said.

"I grabbed his feet and dragged him away then we picked him up and carried him to the footpath," he said.

Mr Walsh said a woman who was walking past the service station began performing CPR on the man.

"I was checking his pulse and the lady was giving CPR and about a minute later a doctor turned up and took over," he said.

Ambulance paramedics arrived a short time later, but the man died at the scene.

Mr Walsh said CFA firefighters were working at the scene to try and contain the leak.

"Once the doctor turned up I was trying to stop the gas going into the service station, helping the attendant isolate the leak," he said.

"It's a bit of a shock. I felt a bit ill, probably from the gas as well as what happened. The gas was quite strong."

Surrounding houses were evacuated as a precaution while emergency workers contained the leak.

Police and WorkSafe are investigating the incident.

<http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,25437001-661,00.html>

USA, ILL, CARBONDALE

MAY 6 2009.

AKIN OIL TANK FIRE MAY HAVE BEEN INTENTIONALLY SET

Becky Malkovich

A "firestarter" could be responsible for a blaze that lit up the countryside in rural Franklin County late Monday night.

A plume of thick black smoke and flames shooting from two oil holding tanks - and a third holding water - could be seen for miles as firefighters battled to contain the blaze on Boothby Road, about a mile north of the Akin Blacktop.

The fire was reported at about 9:30 p.m. by a passerby.

"It looked like daylight," Chief Trevor Cardwell of Cave-Eastern Fire Protection District said. "You could have seen a mouse running across the field. That's how bright it was out here."

Cave-Eastern firefighters, with assistance from the nearby Ewing-Northern Fire Protection District and Benton Fire Department, had to wait for some of the fire to burn down before getting close, Cardwell said.

"It was so hot we couldn't get near it," he said. "(The two oil tanks) were shooting fire 7 feet in the air and when they roared up, shot 200 to 300 feet up."

Train traffic was stopped as firefighters used foam to tamp the fire in the tanks, located just feet above a railroad embankment, while motorists were rerouted by Franklin County Sheriff's deputies.

The fire, which completely destroyed the fiberglass water tank and caused heavy damage to the oil tanks, was

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

contained by 11:05 p.m.

The state fire marshal's office will investigate the fire, Cardwell said, one of dozens to have plagued the district's 72-square-mile coverage area since the beginning of the year.

"We've got a firestarter," Cardwell said. "Hay bales, fields, railroad ties, abandoned houses, barns. We've had probably 62 fires since Jan. 1."

Fortunately, he said, no injuries have been reported at any of the fires, including the blaze Monday night.

Officials expected to be at the fire site this afternoon continuing their investigation.

http://www.southernillinoisan.com/articles/2009/05/05/breaking_news/doc4a00312b7df1e377214619.txt

AUSTRALIA, QUEENSLAND, TOOWOOMBA

MAY 9 2009.

MECHANIC BADLY HURT IN MILES EXPLOSION

Lacey Burley

Miles resident Rupert Hosking is recovering in a trauma ward after suffering severe injuries when a pressurised empty fuel tank exploded on Wednesday.

Mr Hosking, 56, is a mechanic for the Dalby Regional Council's Miles depot and was in the workshop when the accident happened at 12.57pm.

He was testing the pressure of a tank when it exploded.

Mr Hosking sustained a serious "degloving" injury as a large section of skin on his upper right thigh was torn off the underlying tissue.

His arteries were exposed.

He also suffered a fractured elbow, abdominal and groin injuries.

Mr Hosking yesterday was reported to be in a stable condition at the Princess Alexandra Hospital's trauma ward.

Dalby Regional Council chief executive officer Phil Berting said Mr Hosking was a very experienced mechanic and ran his own business before being employed by council about four years ago.

Mr Berting said council was covering all medical costs and making accommodation arrangements for Mr Hosking's wife and family members who wish to stay close to him in Brisbane.

"We would make sure he certainly wasn't out-of-pocket and are definitely trying to look after him," he said.

Workplace Health and Safety officers were yesterday at the depot conducting an investigation.

<http://www.thechronicle.com.au/story/2009/05/01/mechanic-badly-hurt-in-miles-explosion/>

CANADA, BC, BURNABY

MAY 8 2009.

MAJOR OIL SPILL AT KINDER MORGAN B.C. FACILITY

Darcy Wintonyk

A major oil spill at a Kinder Morgan terminal in Burnaby, B.C., has now been contained.

Fire and hazmat teams were called to the Burnaby Mountain facility after a contractor discovered a leak of almost 200,000 litres of crude oil seeping from one of the tanks around 10 p.m. Wednesday.

Company spokesperson Andrew Galarnyk told ctvbc.ca roughly 200 cubic metres -- about the equivalent of 1,200 barrels -- leaked from the container but has been completely contained by a tank liner.

"No product has leaked out of the dike or offsite and the dike has done its job," he said.

None of the oil spilled into the surrounding residential area or nearby Burrard Inlet.

Witnesses still report a strong smell of gas in the air, but Galarnyk says it is only a so-called "nuisance odour" and is not dangerous.

Emergency responders have covered the oil in foam to prevent it from spreading and three types of air monitoring are underway to deal with the resulting odours. Vacuum trucks are picking up any oil outside the liner.

Environment Canada has visited the facility and is assessing the potential environmental damage.

The cause of the leak is still under investigation. Kinder Morgan reports that contractors were working close to the area before the spill.

More than 230 cubic metres of oil erupted from a Kinder Morgan pipeline in the same area after a line was ruptured by a construction crew working in the municipality in July 2007, covering houses and seeping into nearby Burrard Inlet.

In March, the Transportation Safety Board ruled the accident was the fault of the company, not the city,

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

because it was responsible for making sure the excavation crew knew exactly where the pipeline was before they were allowed to start digging.

There are still 26 outstanding lawsuits as a result of the accident, many of them from homeowners who had to be relocated for months while their homes were cleaned up.

Kinder Morgan is one of the largest pipeline and energy storage companies in North America, with more than 35,000 miles of oil pipelines. The company transports, stores and handles energy products including natural gas, refined petroleum, crude oil and ethanol.

http://www.ctvbc.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20090507/BC_oil_spill_kinder_morgan_090507/20090507?hub=BritishColumbiaHome

USA, WI, COLUMBUS

MAY 12 2009.

FIRE, EXPLOSIONS AT COLUMBUS CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES IN COLUMBUS; RESIDENTS EVACUATED

Barry Adama

Things were slowly getting back to normal in this city after explosions and a fire inside a chemical storage building Monday night prompted an emergency evacuation of residents and the shutdown of two highways near the company.

Firefighters remained at the scene at Columbus Chemical Industries mid-Tuesday morning, but only one hot spot remained inside.

One of the main concerns was chemical exposure from the smoke Monday night into Tuesday, but Columbus emergency management director Gerald Sallamann said there were zero reports of a negative health impact.

"We made a decision last night to allow the fire to burn out and monitor the levels of chemicals in the air," Sallamann said at a news conference in Columbus Tuesday morning. "All monitoring has shown chemicals to be below federal standards, posing no threat to humans and animals."

U.S. 151 north of Columbus remained closed in both directions Tuesday morning, but Dodge County Sheriff Todd Nehls said the highways in the area that had been shut down by the blaze were "getting close" to being reopened, but as of 11:45 a.m., the highways were still closed and motorists had to use detour routes.

Eight to 10 homes near the Columbus Chemical Industries complex were still without power.

Residents from about 15 of the 65 homes that were voluntarily evacuated Monday night near the plant were being allowed to return to their homes late Tuesday morning.

"The evacuation was purely precautionary," Sallamann said.

Steve Quandt, executive vice president for Columbus Chemical Industries, addressed the media on behalf of the Sheard family, founders of the firm in 1976.

"They are disappointed and very apologetic to all the families that were inconvenienced," Quandt said.

The fire was confined to one of six buildings on the grounds. No damage estimate has been given. Quandt said the company expects to open soon, and no layoffs are expected.

"We have a team of investigators from the company, but the team hasn't been inside yet," Quandt said. "But the only loss is to property, and property can be replaced."

Several firefighters were slightly injured early on fighting the blaze that broke out about 8 p.m., but there were no other injuries.

Nineteen first responders and firefighters were taken to Columbus Hospital to be decontaminated, and two vehicles were also decontaminated.

Officials closed 151 from its intersection with Wisconsin 60 in downtown Columbus to County S about two and a half miles away. Columbus, with about 4,850 people, is about 40 miles northeast of Madison.

Besides 151, Wisconsin 73 is also closed. Temkin Road, where the company is located, runs along Wisconsin 73, just south of the 151/73 intersection. Motorists were redirected to Wisconsin 16 and 60 in Columbus as a detour.

Officials said 144 people from 65 residences within a half-mile of the fire evacuated, some as a result of officials going door to door asking residents to leave. People in Beaver Dam, 10 miles away, received Reverse 911 calls telling them to stay inside.

At least 150 firefighters and others from 11 fire departments responded to the fire, as well as area hazardous materials teams and National Guard members from Madison, who tried to gauge wind direction to determine where a plume might blow.

Tom Godar, a spokesman for Columbus Chemicals, said the company handled petroleum-based chemicals including hydrochloric and sulfuric acid and other high-purity chemicals and mineral acids.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

"While this is very unfortunate, we don't have any information as to what started the fire," he said.

The fire was confined to a 15,000-square-foot warehouse, Godar said, at the company's location at N4335 Temkin Road about a mile from downtown Columbus and just over the Dodge County line.

An emergency shelter was set up at the Columbus Senior Center, 125 N. Dickason Blvd. At around 10 p.m. about 20 residents were in line to be checked in, some in their pajamas and with their pets. But many other evacuees stayed with family or friends or in area hotels.

Jim Neuman, who has lived a block from the site since 1991, said he smelled burning plastic around 7:30 p.m. and not long after heard about four big explosions. After the arrival of the first fire trucks, he heard more explosions.

"The fire trucks had just arrived and then they had an explosion. There was some force there," he said, adding that he saw a door or drum fly into the air in one of the explosions.

He said he would stay at a local motel with his two dogs.

Cheryl Hoffman, who lives about a half-block from the company, said she saw an explosion from the side of the building. "The roof went off and there was debris in the air. It was just crazy," she said.

John Edwards, who has lived near the plant for 30 years and has worked part time at the plant for six weeks, said everything seemed normal when he left work around 4 p.m.

The explosions "sounded like thunder, a long clap of thunder," he said.

An automated fire alarm alerted the 911 center at 8:04 p.m., officials said, and the first firefighters were there seven minutes later.

Godar said Columbus Chemical employs 55 people in Columbus and has been in business for 30 years. The company, which also has a location in Phoenix, Ariz., serves the pharmaceutical, semiconductor and electronics industries, among others, its Web site said.

<http://www.madison.com/wsj/mad/top/450758>

CANADA, ONT, TORONTO

MAY 13 2009.

DEATH OF NUNAVIK WORKER COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED: COMPENSATION BOARD

A lack of workplace training and planning led to the death of a summer student working at a northern Quebec housing agency last year, the province's workers compensation board has ruled.

Charlie Tookalook Crow, 20, was killed in Aug. 6, 2008, while working for the Kativik Municipal Housing Bureau in Umiujaq, Que.

The bureau has a contract with the Quebec government to oversee public housing in 14 communities across Nunavik, a mostly Inuit region in northern Quebec.

The Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail, which investigated Tookalook Crow's death, found that he was using an angle-disc grinder to cut a hole into the lid of an old barrel that still contained some jet fuel.

The barrel suddenly exploded, the lid flew off and hit Tookalook Crow in the head. He died from his injuries.

Staff did not receive mandatory training

Marcel Charest, the compensation board's regional director in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, told CBC News Monday that staff with the Kativik housing bureau had not received mandatory training to handle dangerous substances.

Speaking in French, Charest said there was also a lack of proper planning for maintenance work on leaking fuel tanks.

At the time of the accident, Tookalook Crow and his co-workers were gathering barrels to collect oil from some leaking fuel tanks at public housing units in Umiujaq.

The compensation board said containers should have been on hand to recover oil from those leaking fuel tanks instead, so that employees would not have had to cut barrels containing dangerous substances.

Fined \$9,000, ordered to provide safety training

Charest said the housing bureau has been ordered to stop all welding work and the cutting of barrels, as well as to ensure all staff have received the proper training.

As well, the bureau was ordered to set up workplace safety programs, including one for new employees.

The Kativik Municipal Housing Bureau has accepted responsibility and was fined \$9,000, along with \$2,260 in fees, Charest said.

Officials with the Kativik Municipal Housing Bureau told CBC News the explosion that killed Tookalook Crow was a "freak accident," since its workers do not usually handle dangerous substances or cut into closed barrels.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Still, Watson Fournier, the bureau's director general, said it has stepped up safety measures and started providing the necessary training.

"Since that time, in about almost half our villages, we did give the dangerous material training course," Fournier said.

"We're proceeding with all our other villages."

Fournier said employees are not allowed to cut or weld closed barrels, adding that the bureau has purchased plastic barrels to handle fuel tank leaks.

The bureau also has a program in place to replace old fuel tanks on housing units. Fournier said several hundred were replaced last year, and a similar number will be replaced this year.

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/north/story/2009/05/12/nvk-crow-death.html>

USA, AR, WHITE CO, SEARCY

MAY 13 2009.

UPDATE: FIRST DAY ON THE JOB FOR 3 WHO DIED IN WHITE CO. EXPLOSION

Robert Bell

Emergency management officials say there has been a fuel storage tank explosion just south of Searcy. Three contract workers are dead. THV has learned that Tuesday was there first day working at the site.

Rick Rainey, a spokesman for TEPPCO Partners LP, a Houston-based energy company, said the explosion occurred just before 2:30 p.m. at a storage facility owned by TEPPCO. Rainey said the tank had been previously cleaned and workers were preparing to install a new gauge on it.

Rainey says it was not immediately clear whether the workers were inside or outside of the tank at the time of the explosion. He said TEPPCO plans a full investigation.

According to Rainey, the TEPPCO facility, just east of U.S. 67, stores diesel and unleaded gasoline for clients. He said the facility has five tanks with a capacity of 250,000 barrels.

The workers are all men and are from Indiana. They were employed by C&C Welding based in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. Again, the company that owns the site is Teppco in Houston, Texas.

"It happened real fast, but it seemed like it lasted forever," Witnesses say it was just after 2 o'clock Tuesday when an explosion rocked a petroleum storage tank at the Teppco facility.

The three victims had just entered the tank to perform maintenance. According to firefighters first on the scene, the workers lit a welding torch and the tank blew.

"That's why I asked them to send several ambulances because I knew there was a lot of people out there," Maureen Gray lives across a field from the tanks.

She called 9-1-1 after the explosion nearly knocked her to her knees.

Gray says, "We were working out in the yard, my husband was mowing and I was working out in the flower beds and all of the sudden I heard a loud explosion. And about the time the explosions went off my knees just buckled."

The concussion collapsed the empty tank. Emergency management officials say there were no petroleum products spilled or spread by the blast.

Tommy Jackson of ADEM says, "Apparently three workers from a private contracting firm in Kentucky were dispatched down to clean this storage tank."

The men worked for C & C Welding from Elizabethtown, Kentucky. But the men were actually from Indiana. This was the first day of work here at the site for the three of them.

Maureen Gray says, "I've lived here since I was four years old. I've just always known it's been here and that something could happen. Today it is a very sad day, very sad."

<http://www.todaysthv.com/news/local/story.aspx?storyid=84956&catid=2>

USA, ID, LEWISTON

MAY 13 2009.

SPARK SETS OFF FIRE AT FLYING J PARKING LOT

Matt Loveless

A fuel pump sparked a fire in North Lewiston Monday.

Firefighters were called to the Flying J at about 1:30 to reports of a fuel spill at the gas station.

"When we first came out of the station we had a big black smoke cloud coming out," said Lewiston Fire Department Acting Fire Captain Randy Arnold.

Arnold said someone was emptying the fuel tank in their new pickup at the north end of the parking lot.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

"It's an in-tank fuel pump, so they were siphoning off fuel out of the fuel tank, so they could dry out the tank and replace the fuel pump," said Arnold. "In the process of siphoning out this fuel out with an electric pump a spark occurred, ignited the fuel, and started a fire out in the parking lot."

Two men were able to push the truck safely out of the flames. No one was injured.

The fire ignited some grass next to the parking lot, but store employees were able to use fire extinguishers to put out much of the blaze before Lewiston firefighters showed up on scene.

"We've laid absorbent down to pick up the last of the fuel that was out, washed out the area," said Arnold. "So it's really safe."

<http://www.klewtv.com/news/local/44746832.html>

USA, WYP, RAWLINS

MAY 13 2009.

STATE WILL INVESTIGATE COSTLY REFINERY SPILL

Dustin Bleizeffer

The Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality says a spill at Sinclair Refinery released upward of 3 million gallons of "gasoline-grade" liquid.

Department spokesman Keith Guille says about 65,000 barrels of liquid were released. One oil barrel equals 42 gallons. Guille isn't sure when the spill occurred but says dikes prevented the substance from flowing off the site.

Guille says the substance was highly flammable and to his knowledge, Sinclair employees have cleaned up as much of the spill as possible.

Guille expects to obtain more details about the spill in a report from Sinclair Refinery. Refinery officials have declined to comment.

http://www.localnews8.com/Global/story.asp?S=10350078&nav=menu554_1_1

USA, AR, GARNER

MAY 14 2009.

OFFICIALS HUNT FOR CLUES IN GAS-TANK EXPLOSION

Amy Upshaw

Federal investigators combed the scene of a deadly gas-tank explosion in the small community of Garner on Wednesday in hopes of uncovering clues about what caused the blast.

No new details were released about the blast that occurred inside an empty TEPPCO Partners LP-owned gasoline storage tank in rural White County.

"We don't know exactly what caused the incident," said Damon Hill, a spokesman for the federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Commission, which is responsible for inspecting the tank that exploded.

Hill said inspectors conducted an "in-depth, internal" inspection of the tank in 1998 and an external inspection in 2008. However, he had no information about what was found during the inspection or about the other four tanks on that property.

TEPPCO spokesman Rick Rainey said the tank passed the 2008 inspection and was in compliance with all federal regulations.

Rainey said the other tanks, which are filled with fuel, have been deemed safe.

"This was a completely different situation in the fact that" the explosion involved an empty tank. "They [the tanks] have operated without incident for many, many years. This was not the result of the release of product of any kind."

As investigators worked in Arkansas, workers at C&C Welding in Elizabethtown, Ky., mourned the loss of the three men who died.

A woman answering the phone at the business, which was hired by TEPPCO to install a gauge on the tank, said people there were not ready to talk about the accident. She described C&C Welding's owner as "distracted" over the deaths of the men.

White County Coroner David Powell identified the men as William Decker, 48, of Scottsburg, Ind., and Roy Mathis, 60, and Stoney Powell, 45, both of Wheatfield, Ind.

The men were working on the tank about 2:20 p.m. Tuesday when the explosion happened. Powell said their bodies were found outside of the tank. The force of the explosion blew the roof off the tank and shook windows in houses more than a quarter of a mile away.

"There was apparently no fire," Powell said, adding that the bodies did not show any signs of fire-related

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

injuries. "The injuries were simply caused from the concussion of the explosion."

Rainey said the tank had been cleaned within the past two weeks.

Neighbor Maureen Gray was in her front yard planting roses when she heard the explosion. She said she watched a plume of smoke burst into the sky before it was quickly sucked back into the tank.

Elizabeth Todd, a spokesman for the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration in Dallas said Wednesday that two investigators from her agency were at the site looking for a cause for the accident and any possible violations.

Todd said that by law the agency has six months to complete its investigation.

"There's no way of telling how long it will take," she said.

<http://www.nwanews.com/adg/News/259619>

USA, AK, FAIRBANKS

MAY 15 2009.

FUEL LEAKS, CONTAMINATION EYED IN YUKON RIVER FLOODING AFTERMATH

Rena Delbridge

Officials say it could be months before they know roughly how many hundreds of gallons of fuel might have receded with floodwaters from communities along the Yukon River — and what, if any, lasting effects that might have.

"The damage is extensive, and it's over several villages," Ed Meggert said. He is the Department of Environmental Conservation's on-scene coordinator.

"We really haven't dealt with ice like this before. There's been flooding and some ice, but the destruction has not been as extensive. We don't know what we're going to be dealing with."

And with some villages at least partially submerged or buried like rubble among boulders of ice, he said it could be some time before a realistic assessment can be made.

Damage to salmon and waterfowl, people and soils might not be that bad, he suggested. The mighty Yukon is roiling with melting ice and will serve as a mixing zone, diluting contaminants on its own, he said.

State Division of Homeland Security deputy director Michael O'Hare expected to send crews to affected villages later this week to make more thorough assessments of contamination and other threats, such as downed power lines.

Catastrophic flooding and massive ice jams devastated towns and villages from Eagle to Tanana, with the potential for more chaos as a moving ice field is carried to the Lower Yukon.

Rushing waters left washes of debris in their wake, from ice boulders jammed against banks in Eagle to basements and homes drenched in water in Stevens Village and Tanana.

Bulk fuel tanks in Eagle were undamaged, although most of the homes and businesses impacted along Front, Second and Third streets had 500- to 1,000-gallon tanks to supply residents through winter, when highway access to the world is snowed shut, Meggert said.

He was unable to offer an estimate on how much fuel contamination hit the old village, which was decimated by flooding and ice.

"There are problems there," he said.

Late last week, fuel fumes permeated the air around the old village. Reservoirs of floodwaters stood still; oily sheens shimmered in intermittent sunlight. In Eagle, Stacey Pare' spent nearly two hours dousing her cat in Dawn dish soap and warm water, struggling with tears as she massaged oil from Moo Wow's fur.

Many tanks in Eagle might not be located for months until summer temperatures melt off the icebergs hiding them.

"There's a huge ice field there," he said. "We know there are houses and tanks and vehicles and so forth under the ice, but the ice is not safe to traverse at all. It's rotten."

The state sent a contractor to Eagle to stabilize some tanks and separate remaining fuel in damaged tanks — clean fuel in one new storage container, fuel contaminated with water in another. The workers also are picking up drums strewn about.

"The water scattered a lot of tanks and barrels around up there," Meggert said. "That's just about what we're able to do at this point, and that's just one village."

Meggert sent people to Circle two days after the flooding began, and they heard of a new phenomenon from residents.

"The folks there said that as soon as the ice came, there was an overpowering smell of fuel," Meggert relayed. "We're speculating it wasn't from Circle. It must have been from Eagle, and it was somehow incorporated with the ice

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

coming down.”

Fuel might contaminate water wells in several villages. Bill Justice, environmental director for Tanana Chiefs Conference, said his top concern is maintaining a clean supply of water to villages and remediation of spoiled supplies.

He’s relying on DEC response teams, comprised of two hydrologists, a fuel spill expert and a TCC liaison, to assess the degree of hydrocarbon contamination and other environmental or health concerns, for word of damages. Those teams should be on the ground later this week.

Meggert said he’s not sure at this point what long-term health risks spilled fuel could pose.

“We’re kind of in a triage point,” he said. “We’re breaking some new ground and trying to make decisions as we go.”

While non-porous surfaces can be wiped clean of hydrocarbons, porous surfaces, such as cabin logs, can’t. Remediation could be much more involved.

<http://newsminer.com/news/2009/may/14/fuel-leaks-contamination-part-yukon-river-flooding/>

USA, TX, LAMESA

MAY 16 2009.

FIREFIGHTER GIVES DETAILED ACCOUNT OF MASSIVE EXPLOSION IN LAMESA

Ann Wyatt Little

The dramatic video of the fiery explosion in Lamesa is making national news around the country. The fire burned for more than nine hours after a bolt of lightning struck a disposal tank sending smoke in the air for miles.

Fire Service Manager for the City of Lamesa Kendall Amos was there fighting the blaze. "It's just part of what we do. It's an accepted risk -- this one shook me. Mainly because I was worried about my men," said Amos.

After two hours of fighting the blaze firefighters heard a hissing sound. "I was probably 20 yards from the front of the fire. I saw a couple of guys fall and I was running to try to help get them up," said Amos about the seconds following the explosion.

Amos says the chain fence around the salt water disposal site shielded his men from flying debris. "Our people didn't get hit. Our trucks didn't get hit. I can't believe it. It was like a grenade going off," said Amos.

Viewing a scene he describes as a war zone, Amos says it wasn't death that scared him. "Really what was going through my mind was not that I'm going to die, but that I'm going to get burned and have to live," he said.

Crews from Andrews were called in to help fight the blaze. Firefighters say the plume of smoke was a quarter mile wide and covered the city of Lamesa.

Severe weather put NewsChannel 11's Storm Chaser David Drummond just 200 yards from the explosion allowing him to capture the dramatic video. "You've heard my voice next to tornadoes, this time you can hear in my voice I was scared to death," says Drummond.

Drummond agrees with Amos that it was a miracle no one was hurt. "I honestly can't believe we don't have 20 or 30 dead or in hospital. All I can say is the hand of God was on us," says Amos.

One firefighter did suffer minor injuries but is said to be doing just fine. The tank station is a total lost. Estimated damage is around \$725,000 not including clean up costs.

<http://www.kcbd.com/Global/story.asp?S=10373036>

USA, TX, CORPUS CHRISTI

MAY 25 2009.

UPDATE 1 - TANK BURNS AT FLINT HILLS' CORPUS CHRISTI REFINERY

Lightning ignited a fire in a storage tank containing naphtha at Flint Hills Resources 288,126 barrel per day refinery in Corpus Christi, Texas, on Saturday night, according to a notice filed with state pollution regulators.

A Flint Hills representative was not available on Sunday to discuss refinery operations.

A refinery spokesman told KIII-TV in Corpus Christi that refinery production was unaffected by the storage tank fire, according to a report on the station's website.

Firefighters sprayed foam on the tank to extinguish the blaze, according to the notice filed with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

Saturday's blaze was the second fire last week at Flint Hills' Corpus Christi refinery.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

A corrosion inhibitor tank caught fire on a gasoline-producing fluidic catalytic cracking unit at the refinery on Tuesday. The FCC was shut for about 24 hours after Tuesday's fire.

Flint Hills Resources, based in Wichita, Kansas, is a subsidiary of privately held Koch Industries Inc. <http://in.reuters.com/article/oilRpt/id!INN2441675220090524>

USA, TX, CORPUS CHRISTI

MAY 28 2009.

LIGHTNING STRIKES OIL STORAGE TANK

Officials said a lightning strike is to blame for a fire at an oil storage tank near Clarkwood Road and County Road 3232.

The fire started around 1:45 p.m. Wednesday afternoon, and witnesses said they heard two explosions.

"We were sitting right there working and lightning hit that first tank and it blew up," witness Danny Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez was working on a nearby well. After the lightning strike, he and his crew stopped working and sought shelter in their work truck. Later, they were evacuated by firefighters.

"We just decided we would wait it out instead of getting hit by lightning," Rodriguez said.

It took about an hour to contain the flames. Officials with El Paso Exploration and Production said a mixture of water and oil was stored in the tank, and thankfully, they were not full.

"One of those tanks did have a pop-off valve that operated perfectly, thankfully. Basically, what happens with those when the heat impinges on them is that the liquid inside begins to boil and the gas that is produced is off-gassed through the vents," CCFD Battalion Chief Richard Quintero said.

Quintero also said no one was hurt in the fire, and the TCEQ was monitoring the big, black plume of smoke that was blowing away from the city.

"You don't hear about it too often in town, and thankfully it can grow to a huge problem," Quintero said.

http://www.kristv.com/Global/story.asp?S=10433547&nav=menu192_2_4