

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

The Steel Tank Institute is unable to guarantee the accuracy of any information. Every effort has been undertaken to ensure the accuracy of information contained in this publication but it is not intended to be comprehensive or to render advice. Websites may be current at the time of release, however may become inaccessible.

The newsletter may be copied and distributed subject to:

- *All text being copied without modification*
- *Containing the copyright notice or any other notice provided therein*
- *Not distributed for profit*

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

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

USA, MN, MINNEAPOLIS

JUNE 30 2009.

THREE INJURED WHEN DIESEL FUEL TANK EXPLODES

Panhia Yang

Authorities want to know why a diesel fuel tank exploded Monday afternoon. The explosion blew out a large section of the wall on a building at Gary's Diesel Service. The blast also set the building's roof on fire. Seven people were inside the building at the time of the explosion. Three people suffered minor injuries.

http://www.kare11.com/news/news_article.aspx?storyid=818621

USA, NY, NEW YORK

JUNE 26 2009.

HOSPITAL WORKER SUFFERS SEVERE BURNS AFTER EXPLOSION AT COLUMBIA-PRESBYTERIAN MEDICAL CENTER

Jan Ransom, Alison Gendar and Wil Cruz

A worker was severely burned Friday when a water tank exploded at Columbia University's medical school. Dario Culeay suffered burns to 90% of his body when alcohol being used to clean water pipes sparked the morning blast, police and fire officials said.

"His clothes were ripped open," said Darrel Mabry, 36, who works across the street from the hospital. "And his skin was burnt, his face and his arms."

Paramedics rushed Culeay to nearby Harlem Hospital, which has a burn unit.

They first tried to bring Culeay to the burn unit at New York Presbyterian - Weill Cornell Medical Center on the East Side, police said.

But "it took a turn for the worse," said Paul Browne, the NYPD's chief spokesman.

He was in serious condition Friday night.

Two other men, who were not identified, suffered minor injuries, police said. One was taken to the burn unit at Jacobi Medical Center in the Bronx, fire officials said.

Investigators said the blast - which happened on the 22nd floor - appeared to be accidental.

A spokesman for Columbia University Medical Center said Culeay, a contractor for Acid Waste Management, was performing routine maintenance. The Yonkers-based company did not return calls.

One worker said the tanks were old and dangerous. "Those tanks should have been changed years ago," said the worker, who didn't want his name used.

http://www.nydailynews.com/ny_local/2009/06/26/2009-06-26_hospital_worker.html

USA, NY, NEW YORK

JUNE 30 2009.

WORKER HURT IN COLUMBIA TANK BLAST FIGHTS FOR LIFE AT HARLEM HOSPITAL

Wil Cruz

The worker who was burned in a water tank explosion at a Manhattan medical school was clinging to life Saturday, officials said.

Manuel Culcay was in critical condition at Harlem Hospital with burns to 85% of his body. He was breathing 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

with the help of a ventilator, officials said.

Culcay, a contractor for Acid Waste Management in Yonkers, was doing routine work Friday in a water tank at Columbia University's Medical Center. The alcohol he used to clean the pipes sparked the blast.

The intensity of the explosion seared Culcay's safety harness.

Paramedics Mark Caplan and Corey Romanowski had just dropped off a patient at nearby New York-Presbyterian Hospital Columbia when they got the call.

"We were done with our shift," said Mark Caplan, a paramedic for Station 16 in Harlem. "I guess we were at the right place at the right time."

The explosion left Culcay's co-workers with minor injuries, officials said. But the 39-year-old worker, though alert and conscious, was badly burned.

"He was having trouble breathing," said Caplan, 41. "He asked if he was going to be all right.

"I wanted to keep him calm," the 18-year veteran added. "We assured him that we would do everything possible to stabilize him."

The paramedics raced to Harlem Hospital, which has a burn unit. The quick-thinking emergency responders checked in on Culcay Friday night and kept him in their thoughts last night.

"We're praying for him," Caplan said.

Officials said the explosion appeared to be accidental. Fire marshals were still investigating the cause.

http://www.nydailynews.com/ny_local/2009/06/28/2009-06-28_worker_hurt_in_tank_blast_fights_for_life.html

USA, IA, DES MOINES

JULY 3 2009.

MAN INJURED IN EXPLOSION AT JOHNSTON ASPHALT FACILITY

An explosion at a Johnston industrial plant sent one man to the hospital with minor burns Thursday morning. Diesel fuel used to clean the workings of a conveyor belt at Des Moines Asphalt and Paving, 5109 N.W. Beaver Ave., exploded at about 11:45 a.m. Flames from the blast traveled down the conveyor belt and burned a plant worker. We would describe (the burns) as very minor, maybe first-degree if that,|| said Johnston Fire Chief Jim Kroshe. A helicopter from Mercy Medical Center took the man to the hospital. His name and condition were not available. The conveyor belt feeds four large vertical tanks that dispense asphalt to trucks. The blast also tore loose two 2-foot-by-3-foot steel sheets on the belt and damaged a third, Kroshe said. The company had already begun to make repairs Thursday afternoon.

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/article/20090703/NEWS/90702038/-1/NEWS04>

USA, AZ, KINGMAN

JULY 4 2009.

'WE'RE NOT GOING TO LET THIS DESTROY OUR COMMUNITY'

Erin Taylor

Outdoors expert and Miner contributor Don Martin shares memories of a day 36 years ago he will never forget

Don Martin was on the Kingman Police force for just over a year when he was called to the scene of a burning propane tank at the Doxel Propane Plant July 5, 1973.

He remembers standing with a group of firefighters as they squirted water on the fire before Martin was sent to direct traffic around the scene.

Ten minutes later, those firefighters were dead.

The boiling liquid-expanding vapor explosion (BLEVE) remains one of the biggest tragedies in the history of Kingman. The city lost 11 firefighters and one civilian that day, while dozens of others were left with a lifetime of physical and emotional scars.

No one realized the danger that day until it was too late, Martin said. The top of the burning tanker was so hot, it was cherry red and Martin said he could hear the tank groaning and hissing.

Still, everything appeared under control. Martin was diverting traffic off of Route 66 onto Fairgrounds Avenue when an Arizona Highway patrolman raced to his car and warned him the tank could blow at any second. They were about a half-mile away from the fire, Martin said.

"I had turned my back to the tank car, and just as I turned around, it blew," Martin said.

The tanker exploded about 20 minutes after the initial call for help.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

The rupture in the tank had decreased the pressure inside the container, causing the liquid inside to boil and rapidly create a large amount of vapor. It was the wave of overpressure created by the vapor that caused the explosion.

War zone

The initial concussion of the explosion knocked Martin off his feet. A blast of super heated air followed. The air was so hot that it liquefied the oil in the asphalt. When Martin pushed himself off the ground, his badge left an impression in the road.

He returned to the scene of the explosion to find a "war zone." Most of the city's first-responders were injured in the blast, including a number of police officers.

So many were injured that Martin and Officer Ben Lamb were the only ones left who weren't injured. They were treating victims and evacuating people away from the fire when they were approached by Officer Steve Radford.

"Don, we have to help people," Martin remembers him saying. Radford was in shock and didn't notice his shirt was burned off his back. His uniform continued to smolder in Martin's squad car as he drove him to the hospital. It stuck to the seat, along with some of Radford's skin, when he got out.

Martin returned to treat more victims. By this time a wall of fire was being pushed by prevailing winds and began threatening bystanders and homes. Martin saw two small girls standing in a field with the fire moving fast in their direction. The pilot of a slurry bomber in the area in case of wildfires spotted them, too. The bomber dropped the red slurry in between the girls and the fire and they scurried away.

The slurry landed on top of Martin's car, denting in the roof, damaging the emergency lights and leaving the entire exterior covered in pink liquid. Martin temporarily forgot the gravity of the situation.

"I thought, 'I'm really going to get in trouble for messing this car up,'" he said.

The pilot made the right call, though.

"I was still quite a distance from the kids," Martin said. "I don't know if I would have gotten there in time."

Community in mourning

First-responders Frank Henry, John Campbell, Donald Webb, Roger Hubka, Christopher Sanders, Joseph Chambers III, William Casson, M.B. (Jimmy) Cox, Richard Lee Williams, Alan Hansen, Art Stringer and Doxol Gas Co. employee Marvin Mast were killed.

It would be months before any sense of normalcy returned. The weeks after the explosion were filled with hospital visits and funerals. Martin went to the hospital to visit Alan Hansen, a 34-year-old volunteer firefighter and veteran patrolman with the Arizona Department of Public Safety. "I'm going to make it," Hansen told Martin. He died 14 days after the explosion.

"We're a community today because of the fortitude of the people back then who pulled together and said, 'We're not going to let this destroy our community, even if it destroyed our buildings and took some of our own,'" Martin said.

Martin returned to the police force for another 15 years before he retired. His partner that day, Officer Lamb, is also retired and lives in Golden Valley. Radford, the officer Martin transported in his car, returned to work with the department for a few years before moving to the East Coast. He was killed in the early 1980s in a car accident in the line of duty.

The memories of that day will live with Martin forever. He still gets emotional talking about what he saw. But Martin said he is able to take comfort in seeing the families of the firefighters who were killed. Many of them, you see, have grown up to become firefighters themselves.

A memorial service to honor those killed will be held at 9 a.m. Sunday at Firefighter Park.

<http://www.kingmandailyminer.com/main.asp?SectionID=1&subsectionID=1&articleID=32264>

USA, CA, WILMINGTON

JULY 4 2009.

LIFE ON AN URBAN OIL FIELD

Leslie Berliant

The first thing I noticed was that although we were just 20 miles south of where I started, the temperature was a good 15 degrees hotter.

The smells of tar and sulfur permeated the air. After a while, my eyes started to burn and itch.

I wasn't in Nigeria or Iraq or Venezuela. My guide, Jesus Torres, otherwise known as JT, had taken me to Wilmington, Calif., in Los Angeles County, just 20 miles south of the L.A. beach town where I live.

508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Wilmington is home to 53,000 people – 45,000 of them Latino, 24 percent below the national poverty level – living in the midst of oil wells, oil refineries and the Port of Los Angeles. It was one of the stops on the Toxic Tour of Los Angeles that the organization, Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) leads. The group advocates around issues of environmental justice showcasing how our dependence on fossil fuels has impacted low income neighborhoods across the country.

Of the more than 2 million barrels of oil refined in California each day, 650,000 of them come from five refineries in the Wilmington area run by BP, ConocoPhillips, Tesoro and Valero.

Along with the oil, they produce 1,600 tons per year of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs).

Add to that gas flaring, emissions from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, the Alameda railway corridor, the constant passage of diesel trucks along residential streets as they exit the ports, and the drilling of a large oil field in Wilmington in the midst of a residential neighborhood – Wilmington contains the third largest oil field in the United States – and you have a series of cumulative impacts that wreak havoc with the air quality and the health of the people living here.

Active and abandoned drills take up residence in lots right next to homes and schools.

One homeowner told me that the abandoned drill next to his house has been there for 35 years (right). His elderly father finally started jumping the fence and clearing the lot so that it would not become overgrown with weeds and vermin.

JT explained to me that the oil rigs don't just go up and down, but they drill sideways. Neighbors complain about noise, odor, cracked foundations and walls, and unusually high levels of seismic activity.

When oil prices are high, some of the drills run 24 hours a day, seven days a week, like the drill run by Warren Energy and Petroleum that sits behind the neighborhood little league field (participation fees covered courtesy of Warren Energy). The company, which has frequently been in violation of permit conditions and limits, plans to put in 540 more wells in the area.

After out-going Los Angeles City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo went on the tour, he cited a number of polluters and permit violators in the area. But there still seem to be violations and lax air quality regulations everywhere you look in Wilmington.

Children leave the Hawaiian Street School near the Port of Los Angeles

Walk down the streets of Wilmington and the smell of sulfur is pervasive. That's in part because many of California's refineries are using crude with high levels of sulfur dioxide and hydrogen sulfide. That means more incidences of asthma and other respiratory diseases. In fact, childhood asthma rates among 5- to 17-year-olds in the area are 21.9 percent, 6.3 percent higher than the rest of Los Angeles and 7.2 percent above the national average.

The Wilmington Park Elementary School is sandwiched between the Ultramar Refinery, 1,000 feet away, and the Tesoro Refinery, 2,000 feet away. Other schools sit perilously close to the constant spew of pollution from the ports.

In some neighborhoods, residents look down their street to a view of shipping container graveyards – the refuse of America's insatiable consumption of foreign goods. Industrial lot owners were granted general permits for storage at a time when the city had no language specifying the type of storage. Not only are they an eye sore, but they attract rats and other vermin.

CBE's Long Battles for Low-Income Neighborhoods

As we drove through the Alameda Corridor where JT grew up, an area congested with diesel trucks, he told me how he had no idea as a kid how bad things were and that the air quality in parts of Los Angeles might actually be worse than his native Mexico City.

He went to school for urban planning and joined CBE organizing campaigns in Wilmington to fight the oil companies and to force regulators to do their jobs.

As we drive around L.A., he rattles off different regulations and regulatory bodies that he must work with to help the people of Wilmington. He can't imagine doing anything else, and he knows it will be a long fight. But tough battles are something that CBE has always been willing to undertake.

In 1998, the group helped community activists shut down two chrome plating facilities in Bell Gardens, each located next to a school, but only after more than 25 students and teachers had died of cancer and area miscarriage rates had skyrocketed. In 2001 they won settlement forcing oil companies to clean up more than 700 sites contaminated with the toxic gasoline additive MTBE and helped spark a statewide ban. Currently they are fighting the Vernon Power Plant, which is perilously close to the residential community of Huntington Park.

Huntington Park is no stranger to long battles over environmental issues, either. They fought for eight years to

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

get rid of La Montaña, the mountain of waste and concrete rubble that was stored across the street from residents like 85-year-old Linda Marquez after the collapse of the 10 Freeway during the 1994 Northridge earthquake. The dust and toxins from the refuse have been blamed for high rates of lung disease, miscarriages and birth defects in the area.

As I spoke to Marquez about the experience, there was a non-stop background whine of a buzz saw at a nearby mill.

"I've lived here all my life," Marquez, whose apartment had been a frequent meeting place for community activists, told me. "We worked very hard (to get rid of the dump site) and didn't give up. Every time they turned us down, we kept going."

She was very proud of the fact that throughout it all, activists never damaged anybody's property, even when the bulldozers would operate at 1 a.m. and keep the neighbors awake. Instead, they marched, went to City Council meetings, and solicited help from Huntington Park's mayor and organizations like CBE and UCLA LOSH (Labor Occupational Safety and Health Program).

When City Councilman Rick Loya went on a CBE tour to see the site, one of his lungs partially collapsed and he had to be hospitalized.

The Montaña site (seen through a bullet hole in a fence at left) has since been mostly cleaned up, but the dust still coats the neighborhood several years later. The site has been mentioned for a new elementary school, but neighbors worry that toxins continue to permeate the area and would rather the city find a safer spot.

JT tells Marquez that he is taking me to Wilmington to see the oil refineries that he is fighting. She pumps her fist in the air and tells us to go help Wilmington. "They helped us in our struggle" she says.

CBE Goes to Washington

CBE's executive director, Bill Gallegos, recently returned from Washington, D.C., where he met with mainstream green groups, other environmental justice advocates and administration officials like green jobs advisor Van Jones and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson.

I asked him if he was happy with the climate bill that just passed the House.

"We're critical of cap and trade," Gallegos said, "because it's a proven failure with one anomalous exception. Under cap and trade, costs go up, carbon emissions go up and hedge fund managers get rich."

Gallegos would like to see carbon managed through regulation instead.

"Regulation is the most proven, fair and equitable system for lowering emissions," he told me.

Later, though, he added that we also need to democratize the regulatory process. "Most regulatory agencies have no representation from the people impacted by their decisions," he said. Gallegos is concerned that the people regulating air quality in southern California, for example, live so far away from the communities they're regulating and hold meetings during the day when few people can attend.

"If we're going to transform, people need a stronger voice in the discussion. Corporate America has a lot of power, what about the rest of us?"

"We go to meetings," he added, "but we didn't develop the rules."

Still, Gallegos believes that regulation is superior because it deals with the issue of co-pollutants which cap and trade does not, a problem that some mainstream green groups don't talk about.

"When CO2 comes out of a smokestack, it doesn't come out alone" Gallegos explained. "Sometimes there's nitrous oxide, benzene, sulfides, all of which have immediately harmful health impacts on neighboring communities." The way Gallegos sees it, these co-pollutants are immediately harming what he calls 'our communities': low-income and people of color.

Gallegos is also concerned about who will monitor the cap-and-trade system and the technology transfer to developing countries. "Will it increase the debt transfer to the global south like with the green revolution?" he asked.

Mostly, he is concerned that the bill won't work.

"We don't have the luxury to get it wrong," he said. "NASA scientist Jim Hansen said that we need radical reductions in the next 10 years to survive. These aren't radical." Not radical enough to solve the climate crisis and not radical enough to solve the health crises for the people living on the front lines of America's fossil fuel addiction.

<http://solveclimate.com/blog/20090703/life-urban-oil-field>

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

USA, IN, GARY

JULY 4 2009.

U.S. STEEL PLANS PUBLIC UPDATE ON BENZENE PROBLEM

COMPANY'S TUESDAY MEETING WILL ALSO EXPLAIN \$1.4 MILLION TREATMENT SYSTEM INSTALLATION.

Gitte Laasby

In late March, U.S. Steel Gary Works revealed that the company had been leaking benzene into Lake Michigan for several years, probably from a former tank farm. On Tuesday, residents can get an update on what the company has been doing to prevent the contamination from spreading when U.S. Steel holds its quarterly public update on various cleanups. As part of its presentation, the company will give an update on the installation of a \$1.4 million treatment system comprised of more than 100 groundwater monitoring wells around the perimeter of U.S. Steel Gary Works. The system was supposed to be installed in the past three months and is intended to prevent the plume of benzene from spreading. It's part of a legal agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. At the last public Community Involvement Team Effort meeting on March 31, U.S. Steel officials said they expected the system to be up and running between August and September. Last summer, the company found benzene in the groundwater near the plume up to 600 times the federal drinking water limit. The nearest drinking water intake is about a mile from U.S. Steel's property. The EPA did not believe there's an immediate risk to drinking water because the benzene gets diluted and dissolved. Indiana American Water had not detected any benzene in finished drinking water, which goes to Gary, Merrillville, Hobart, Portage, Winfield, Chesterton, Schererville, Crown Point, Lake Station, Griffith, Ogden Dunes and New Chicago. At the meeting Tuesday, the public has a chance to ask U.S. Steel and EPA officials questions on the project. The company will also update attendees on landfill closures, self-implemented interim stabilization measures for groundwater on the east side of the facility, and the use of the Corrective Action Management Unit for managing waste that requires corrective action.

<http://www.post-trib.com/news/1651457,usscite0705.article>

USA, WI, BURBANK

JULY 5 2009.

SUSPICIOUS FIRE BURNS BURBANK BIODIESEL PLANT

Paula Horton

A suspicious fire, possibly caused by fireworks, heavily damaged a Burbank biodiesel manufacturing plant early Saturday, officials said.

About 30,000 gallons of vegetable oil spilled when a three-alarm fire broke out.

The oil was contained to the plant and no contaminants reached the Snake River, said Dan Partridge, spokesman for the state Department of Ecology.

Ramon M. Benavides, vice president of business development for Gen-X Energy Group, said fire officials told him the blaze started outside the plant and may have been caused by fireworks.

Walla Walla Fire District 5 crews responded at 3:15 a.m. to the fire at the biodiesel plant at the Port of Walla Walla's Burbank Industrial Facility.

When firefighters arrived, flames were visible and vegetable oil was leaking inside the building, said volunteer firefighter Tera Waters.

Crews from the Kennewick and Pasco fire departments and Franklin Fire District 3 were called to help fight the blaze.

It took about 30 minutes to contain the flames, Waters said. Firefighters were on scene for about six hours.

No one was working when the fire started and there were no injuries to crews. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

An Ecology spill response team was called to ensure no oil had made its way to the Snake River, Partridge said.

The plant has a system of floor drains that were able to catch and contain most of the vegetable oil, he said.

"At this time, we don't know of any of the oil that got to the river," Partridge said. "We are working with the company on a cleanup plan. They will not be liable for any fines or anything like that because none of the oil got into the river."

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/1406/story/636302.html>

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

USA, UT, SALT LAKE CITY

JULY 8 2009.

NATIONAL GUARD CLEANING UP JET FUEL LEAK

Erin Alberty

More than 6,300 gallons of jet fuel leaked onto the ground and into a canal Tuesday at the Utah Air National Guard headquarters at Salt Lake City International Airport. As of Tuesday night, 4,900 gallons had been recovered and removed, said National Guard Lt. Col. Lisa Olsen. The rest of the leaked fuel was contained in surrounding soil and a canal that flows to the airport, she said. The water in the canal is not potable and does not connect to any potable water source, Olsen said. The JP8 fuel leaked from a valve in an underground pipeline, she said. The valve was not completely shut when the pipeline was in use.

http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci_12773376

USA, TX, SAN ANTONIO

JULY 9 2009.

5 SERIOUSLY INJURED IN PIPELINE EXPLOSION AND FIRE

Jacqueline Ortiz

Five people were seriously injured in a pipeline explosion and fire Wednesday. The accident happened near the town of Batesville, southwest of San Antonio. Texas Railroad Commission officials say some workers were using a torch near a pipeline when it caught fire and burned them. The workers were taken to a hospital in Dilley after the accident and were then transported by AirLIFE to Brooke Army Medical Center around 3:00 p.m. Officials said they suffered 1st to 3rd degree burns. Three of the workers remain in critical condition. The other two are in stable condition. The victims' names have not been released.

<http://www.woai.com/news/local/story/5-seriously-injured-in-pipeline-explosion-and-fire/bmYs6Abhc0yjmpGTfuPCag.csp>

USA, KS, BONNER SPRINGS, JULY 9 2009. OIL SPILL LEAVES FAMILY IN SHOCK

Nicole Kelley

The morning of June 15 was not a pleasant one for Doug and Tonya Wiley.

The Bonner Springs residents awoke to a sad sight as they discovered that 150 gallons of used oil, which was dumped on the main road in the middle of the night near their home, had been washed by the rain onto their driveway.

"It was like a black lake in the middle of the driveway," Tonya Wiley said. "My husband came in and said, 'We have a real problem on our hands.' We didn't know what to do. It was a mess. We couldn't let our dog out; we couldn't drive through out the driveway. We had to drive through the hay fields and it was pouring rain."

The Wileys, who live on the 15000 block of Kreider Road in Bonner Springs, one mile from the Leavenworth County line, called the Leavenworth County Sheriff's Department upon discovering the mess.

Wiley said it was clear the oil had been dumped intentionally, as it looked like a truck had stopped in the road, opened a spigot and left a large circle of oil.

For the next week, the Leavenworth County Emergency Management staff and volunteer firefighters from the Sherman Township department worked to clean up the mess.

With a fresh water spring about 50 feet from the driveway where the oil eventually settled, Wiley said the crew worked even harder and faster to ensure the water remained clean. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment was called to test the water that is not used for drinking, but is used for irrigation on the property.

"They worked on it all week long," Wiley said. "Someone was here every day. We couldn't get out of our driveway. The driveway was totally a mess."

Wiley said the property is located between hills and the person who dumped the oil thought it was a good protected spot. In the six years the family has lived at the property, she said nothing like this had ever happened before.

She's not optimistic, however, that the offender will be caught. She said no evidence was left and the sheriff's department can only hope it gets a tip from someone who saw something that night.

"It was frustrating to think someone just did this and then left and then we're left dealing with this for a week," she said. "It consumed my life for a week."

The clean up of the oil dump ended up costing Leavenworth County \$3,402.

<http://www.basehorinfo.com/news/2009/jul/09/oil-spill-leaves-family-shock/>

USA, NY, MAMAKATING

508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

JULY 10 1009.

FORMER RESORT HOTEL FACES ENVIRONMENT LAW CHARGES AFTER OIL SPILL

A former resort hotel that has been under intense scrutiny since it fell into the hands of a Hasidic sect from New City has been charged with three counts of violating the state environmental conservation law after an oil spill at the site Thursday.

State DEC police officer Scott Steingart said his officers, as well as DEC spill response units responded to the former Homowack Hotel, now known as Machne Bnos Square, for an oil spill reported by a local resident around 3:30 p.m. Upon arriving at the site, Steingart learned that the owners of the hotel, a Hasidic group known as Congregation Bais Trana, had released a quantity of heating oil while trying to transfer it from one tank on the property to another. The oil escaped into drains that eventually empty into a nearby stream. A pump was found near a hole by Phillipsport Road may have been used in an apparent attempt to pump water out of the drainage culvert possibly to stop the oil from escaping the property through another pipe that runs under the road, Steingart said.

Thursday evening, firefighters and members of a Hazmat team tried to stanch the flow with pads of absorbent material.

No oil seems to have left the property, Steingart said.

However, charges were filed against the congregation for failing to report the spill, which initially occurred at 7:45 a.m., Steingart said. In addition, the group was charged with failure to register bulk storage tanks and producing an "unwholesome" material on or near a public road, all misdemeanors that carry heavy fines under the state environmental law.

The Skver sect of Hasidim from New City purchased the hotel, a former resort for non-Hasidic Jews, along with 450 acres of land in 2006, apparently intent on creating a new Hasidic village akin to the Satmar village of Kiryas Joel in Monroe. It was not known last night if there was a connection between the sect and Congregation Bais Trana.

Mamakating town officials, however, have lately been critical of the operation of the hotel, a summer getaway for Hasidim from all over the state, largely because the proprietors have failed to observe building, health and safety codes.

Town officials, including Supervisor Robert Fiore, were at the site last night, meeting with members of the congregation.

Town resident Andy Weil, who reported the spill, alleged that the town leaders were failing to stay vigilant enough on the Hasidic group's activities.

"There's a lot of problems at this end of Mamakating that the town's not dealing with," he said.

At the property, members of the congregation refused to speak to the reporter.

<http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090709/NEWS/90709038/-1/SITEMAP>

USA, WI, SAUKVILLE

JULY 12 2009.

WORKER INJURED IN SAUKVILLE PLANT EXPLOSION

Dan O'Donnell

A worker was injured Friday in an explosion at the Cook Composites & Polymers plant in Saukville. The victim, a 57-year-old Grafton man, suffered severe burns. According to Saukville Police, the man was mixing several ingredients and had just put them in a heated kettle which caused a "flash back," burning the employee. He was transported to Columbia St. Mary's Hospital in Mequon. The company's Web site says, Cook Composites "is a world leader in the production and distribution of gel coats, unsaturated polyester resins, coatings resins and emulsions." It is the world's leading producer of gel coats and also has the largest composites distribution network in North America.

<http://www.620wtmj.com/news/local/50481472.html>

USA, UT, HEBER CITY

JULY 14 2009.

EXPLOSIONS ROCK HEBER AS FIRE DEVOURS GARAGE

Fields Moseley

A garage went up in flames in Heber City Monday afternoon and flammable gasses inside exploded, rocking the normally quiet town.

"There was nothing I could do," said Lynn Hicken, the owner of the garage. It set behind his home and housed the oxygen and acetylene business his father started more than 80 years ago.

"A couple of smaller booms, then mushroom cloud boom," said neighbor, Donna Allen.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

The explosions quickly got neighbors attention. Many rushed around checking on neighbors as shrapnel and debris shot into the air.

"We literally thought we were being bombed because it was so loud and so intense," said Josh Robertson.

"It rocks the ground," Hicken said. "Those tanks have 2500 pounds per square inch in them."

Fire fighters couldn't afford to get close and had to let the gas tanks go. Police started by evacuating a one block radius, then made it about four.

"It can be pretty dangerous," Hicken said. "Lucky it didn't kill someone."

No one was even hurt as the fire ripped through the tanks, equipment, even a handful of cars that were parked nearby. But the explosions broke windows a block away.

Hicken doesn't think the fire started inside his garage, but he is resigned to let investigators sort it all out.

"We'll just have to get the insurance in here," Hicken said. "Get it where it needs to be, mow it down and start over."

Meanwhile, neighbors have a good explosion story to tell in the normally quiet town of Heber.

"It was something so different from this quiet town, it was amazing," said Robertson.

Several people including at least one family was still evacuated as of Monday night because there was no electricity or gas to a nearby four-plex.

<http://www.kutv.com/content/news/local/story/Explosions-Rock-Heber-As-Fire-Devours-Garage/IUJeKafwUS3YNwDg18nJQ.csp>

USA, TX, HOUSTON

JULY 16 2009.

TANK INSPECTIONS PUT SQUEEZE ON CUSHING OIL STORAGE

Oil storage tank operators, faced with a regulatory deadline, have had to empty, inspect and in some cases repair crude oil tanks, putting a squeeze on already tight capacity at the crucial Cushing, Oklahoma, hub, people familiar with operations said Wednesday.

When repairs are required, a tank can be out of service for months, inspectors said, and with the Cushing delivery point for NYMEX oil futures already at high storage levels due to weak fuel demand, any loss of tankage can be problematic.

Not all tanks have been affected at the same time, but "what we have seen is a massive de-stocking of fuel in tanks. We believe these tanks are being refurbished to comply with new regulations," said a source familiar with operations.

"Some tanks have come out of that process and are full again. Others have not," the source said.

At issue is American Petroleum Institute Standard 653 adopted as a regulation by the U.S. Department of Transportation in 1999, said Patricia Klinger of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

The 10-year deadline for a full out-of-service inspection of tanks arrived in May. That requires a tank to be emptied, cleaned, inspected and, if too much corrosion is found, repaired by installing new steel plates, officials said.

"You cannot get it done in a matter of days. Large tanks take weeks or months," said Greg McQuillan of inspection company Acuren Group Inc.

Exactly how much tankage has been affected is difficult to determine because tanks are held by multiple private entities. Not all companies have been affected in the same way. Companies were reluctant to comment on operations.

But McQuillan said tank inspection work has been on the rise nationwide for months.

According to U.S. Energy Information Administration weekly reports, Cushing has not appeared full in recent weeks. EIA said last week that storage topped 30 million barrels for the first time since last March and rose again Wednesday to 30.8 million. But the level was above 34 million in February.

The New York Mercantile Exchange has said at least 47 million barrels of capacity exists in the various terminals at Cushing, although analysts have said storage is kept below maximum capacity to facilitate operations.

Cushing storage operator TEPPCO Partners LP said last week their 525-mile Seaway pipeline from Freeport, Texas, to Cushing was operating below capacity because of a storage squeeze at the NYMEX delivery point.

White Cliffs Pipeline, a unit of SemGroup LP another Cushing storage operator, said its pipeline from Colorado also faced tightness at the NYMEX storage hub. "Cushing is pretty darned full right now," said Jeff Matthews of White Cliffs.

The biggest Cushing operator, Enbridge Inc, had said in May its pipeline to Cushing was at 70 percent capacity and it was retiring some old tanks.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Storage of crude oil at Cushing has soared since last year, when totals were 22 million barrels or less.

Traders have been buying oil to hold for later sale because the crude market has been in "contango," meaning oil for prompt delivery is much cheaper than oil for future delivery. As a result, storage at Cushing has ballooned.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/rbssEnergyNews/idUSN1534429220090715>

AUSTRALIA, TASMANIA, LAUNCESTON

JULY 17 2009.

BLAST RISKS IGNORED, COURT TOLD

Nick Clark

Dangerous practices in waste oil collection were still occurring in Tasmania, a coronial inquest in Launceston heard yesterday.

Veolia Environmental Services environment manager John Brennan told an inquest into the death of two northern Tasmanian men that regulators were turning a blind eye to the practices.

Adrian Chugg, 40, of White Hills, and Bruce Beamish, 34, of Turners Beach, were killed in an explosion at Veolia's Launceston site in December 2005 when welding equipment caused gases in a tank to ignite.

Mr Brennan said that while Veolia had improved its waste oil handling procedures, there were "still risks out there every day".

Mr Brennan said he had asked the Department of Environment to update its handling procedures for waste oil which "were hopelessly out of date".

"The answer I got was that 'We don't have the resources, it is not a priority'," he said.

Also yesterday Veolia occupational health and safety officer Robert Wise gave evidence that he had become agitated about a lack of action to improve work safety at the company in the years leading up to the explosion.

Mr Wise said the Launceston plant did not have "no smoking" or "no naked flame" signs at the oil recycling plant.

"You identified the problem and no one listened, counsel for Bruce Beamish's family, Ken Read, said.

"Correct," Mr Wise said.

Under cross examination from David Gunson, counsel for Veolia, Mr Wise said that Mr Chugg should have done a risk assessment because he was about to embark on "inherently dangerous work".

He said Mr Chugg should have been more familiar than most people with the risks because he had worked at the plant for many years.

"If you knew gas was in the top of the tank you wouldn't touch it," Mr Gunson said.

"I wouldn't have carted my tools to the top of the tank until I had assessed the risk," Mr Wise replied.

The inquest before Coroner Steve Carey continues today.

http://www.themercury.com.au/article/2009/07/15/84525_most-popular-stories.html

USA, CA, MARTINEZ

JULY 17 2009.

INQUEST FINDS DROWNING OF SHELL REFINERY WORKER WAS ACCIDENTAL

Malaika Fraley

Friends and family of an Antioch man and Shell Martinez Refinery employee who drowned in a water tower at the facility shed tears of relief after jurors at an inquest into the death determined it was accidental.

The verdict Thursday answered questions over whether 22-year Shell veteran William Maddock could have committed suicide over severe back pain or stress April 29, the day his body was found in the open tank of a 30-foot tower. He was wearing a backpack weighing about 30 pounds.

But Maddock, a 54-year-old father of two, had told several family members and his doctor that he had been wearing weights and climbing towers at the Shell facility for exercise, witnesses testified.

The guardrail on the water tower does not meet the standards set by the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health, Cal/OSHA investigator Eric Berg testified. The agency requires such guardrails to measure between 42 and 45 inches in height; the Shell railing measured only 37 inches. That could have easily provided a tripping factor for Maddock, who was 6 feet 5 inches tall, Berg said.

Maddock would have been unable to save himself once in water, regardless of the weighted backpack, which he had secured with duct tape at the shoulder straps, according to testimony. The water line was 10 feet below the top of the tower.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

The tower did not have a safety ladder inside the tank, another violation of Cal/OSHA rules, Berg said.

Cal/OSHA's own investigation into Maddock's death has not been completed, but could result in potential citations and penalties for the refinery, Berg said.

Several of Maddock's former co-workers became emotional when they testified about the last time they had seen him alive before he went missing while working on the overnight shift.

He had been in a joking mood, which they said was common for Maddock, and showed off pictures of the wooden bed frame he expected to finish hand-crafting over the next two days.

No one could explain why Maddock, who was described as a good employee who was well-liked and always did things "by the book," had a blood-alcohol level that tested at .08, a number that would make driving in California illegal. His widow, Rory Maddock, said it was out of character.

"He was a man of integrity," Rory Maddock said. "If he was going to do (something), then he was going to do it at the best of his ability, whether it was raising his sons or building a home.

The Contra Costa County Coroner's Office routinely holds inquests surrounding deaths that occur in-custody or otherwise involve law enforcement.

Although law enforcement was not involved in Maddock's death, Sheriff Warren Rupf, who also serves as the county coroner, convened an inquest because of the peculiar circumstances surrounding the drowning and the fact that there were no witnesses.

http://www.mercurynews.com/breakingnews/ci_12852300

USA, CA, MODESTO

JULY 18 2009.

SULFURIC ACID SPILLS FROM TANK AT MID PLANT IN MODESTO

The Modesto Irrigation District worked Thursday to clean up a sulfuric acid spill after about 40 gallons were released from a tank at its Woodland generation plant, an MID official said. There were no injuries or evacuations in the spill, which began around 2 a.m. Thursday at the plant on Woodland Avenue and Ninth Street. A weld on a 5,000 gallon sulfuric acid tank failed and caused a slow leak, according to MID spokesperson Melissa Williams. The Modesto Fire Department was called to the scene. The release of the acid was contained within the plant, so there were no public safety issues, Williams said. The MID was working during the day of transferring the acid to another tank, and cleaning up the spilled material. The MID uses the acid in the water demineralization process to get pure water necessary to run the power plant. Contact with the acid can cause burns to the eyes, skins and lungs, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site.

<http://www.modbee.com/local/story/784503.html>

USA, MO, ST JOSEPH

JULY 18 2009.

EVINRUDE MAKES CASE AGAINST ETHANOL

Jeff Leonard

Boat engine maker Evinrude provides the following reasons why boat engines have more problems with ethanol gas: Boaters often store gas in tanks longer than recommended for E10 (90 days). Cars, unlike boats, usually replace fuel every week or two, which successfully prevents the possibility of water-contamination or phase separation, a common problem with ethanolblended fuels. Boat engines live in a water environment — alcohol gas (ethanol) loves to absorb water. Ethanol E10 gas can absorb large amounts of water into the fuel tank that conventionally treated gasoline does not. Boat engines usually last longer than cars. Evinrude points out that many boat owners still own and use marine engines from the 1970s or 1980s. These older engine parts and tanks usually were not designed or tested to withstand the damaging effects of ethanol-treated gas. Some older marine engines (made prior to 1992) have plastic and rubber parts and fiberglass tanks that are not compatible with E10 alcohol fuel.

<http://www.stjoenews.net/news/2009/jul/17/evinrude-makes-case-against-ethanol/>

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

USA, WASHINGTON, D.C – THE METHANOL INSTITUTE. SAFE HANDLING & COMMUNICATIONS HANDBOOKS

The Methanol Safe Handling Manual and Crisis Communication Guidebook are freely available at <http://www.methanol.org> or follow the links below.

Methanol Safe Handling Manual

For the global methanol distribution chain to increase awareness of the chemical, promoting safe handling for workers, consumers, and the environment. This will be a valuable resource for emergency first responders.

<http://www.methanol.org/pdfFrame.cfm?pdf=MethanolSafeHandlingManualOct2008.pdf>

Crisis Communications Handbook

Accompanies the Methanol Safe Handling Manual, and this has been developed to assist companies in planning for Methanol potential incidents.

<http://www.methanol.org/pdfFrame.cfm?pdf=CrisisCommGuidebookOct2008.pdf>

Methanol Fact Sheets

<http://www.methanol.org/pdfFrame.cfm?pdf=FactSheets-102208final.pdf>

USA, LA, HAHNVILLE

JULY 21 2009.

STATE DEQ PROMISES "TOUGH QUESTIONS" FOR DOW

Matt Scallan

A state Department of Environmental Quality official said Monday that an investigator has been at Dow Chemical's Hahnville plant nearly every day to investigate the cause of the July 7 leak of ethyl acrylate fumes that irritated the noses eyes and throats of residents for miles around.

"He's meeting with Dow people and asking some very tough questions about what happened, how it happened and how can we prevent it from happening again," said Mike Alegro, manager of the DEQ's southeast regional office, Monday afternoon.

DEQ and Department of Health and Hospitals representatives attended Monday's Parish Council meeting to answer council questions at the invitation of New Sarpy Postmaster Michael Kernan, who said he and his wife were sickened by the fumes.

Kernan, who criticized the parish's decision not to evacuate Norco and New Sarpy and waited more than three hours to speak, told the council that the officials would not make statements, but would answer questions from the Council. None were asked, and the group left.

Council Chairman Terry Authment said only Kernan asked to be on the council's lengthy agenda.

The DEQ's remarks about enforcement came after an environmental watchdog group is charging that state DEQ officials allowed a problem with three previous leaks of the chemical, starting in October and ending June 15.

"These reports provide further information that Dow has had an ongoing problem with ethyl acrylate and apparently with this tank, and that the Department of Environmental Quality has known about it" said Randy Caruso, a Spatial Analyst for the Louisiana Bucket Brigade.

"Both Dow and DEQ have failed to take the appropriate steps to get to the root of the problem and protect the public," he said.

State officials said the July 7 release was well below the toxic threshold of 25 parts per million over an eight-hour period.

Dow Spokesman Tommy Faucheux said after the June 15 release from the 60-foot wide tank, Dow officials began draining the vessel in order to inspect it for structural problems. A reaction in that tank, which was almost empty at the time, caused the July 7 release.

"We were trying to address the problem," Faucheux said.

The two other releases, in October 20, 2008 and April 22, occurred in two separate tanks, Faucheux said.

The DEQ's Alegro said Monday afternoon that regulated industries have to produce a detailed report unauthorized releases above reportable levels within 60 days of the incident, which allows the DEQ to conduct a "root cause analysis" to determine whether matter should be turned over to the agency's enforcement division.

"If it's an act of God, we usually don't, but if it was the result of a company not doing required maintenance, then we most likely would do that," he said.

The the initial report that Dow filed with the National Response Center, along with correspondence to parish agencies said a tank was being drained in the wake of a leak.

The Bucket Brigade accused the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality was neglectful by not investigating a potential problem and that a report filed with the National Response Center shows that Dow had

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

released ethyl acrylate on June 15. That is four ethyl acrylate releases over a 10-month span, the group said.

The report to the DEQ, filed on June 19th, notes a problem with a tank, in which a quantity of ethyl acrylate was released, but does not say how much.

Alegro said the deadline for Dow to submit its 60 day report has not passed and that information will be available.

http://www.nola.com/news/index.ssf/2009/07/state_deq_failed_to_warn_about.html

USA, NY, NORTH TONAWANDA

JULY 21 2009.

BLOWTORCH SPARKS FUEL TANK FIRE

EIGHT FIRE COMPANIES CALLED TO BLAZE ON RIVER ROAD

Neale Gulley

Eight fire companies fought back flames Monday morning on River Road after crews dismantling an abandoned 50-foot-tall fuel tank sparked a fire with a blowtorch.

About 50 firefighters kept the blaze confined to the huge but mostly empty storage tank after hours of using a flame retarding foam on the structure, which was once used as a fuel distribution point for a long-defunct business at 5335 River Road.

"We have a five million gallon tank that is being dismantled and the demolition team was attempting to cut it ... at some point the fire started," Grand Island Fire Chief Greg Butcher said.

About 4,500 gallons of "petroleum sludge" was barely enough to register in the massive above-ground container, he said, and a "floating lid" inside the structure indicated it was empty by industry standards.

The former business, once variously attached to the name Kinetic Labs, Elmer Goetz Oil Company and Frontier Oil, hasn't been in operation for possibly the past 30 years. The industrial hulk is currently foreclosed and the property of Erie County.

Fire officials tentatively deemed the blaze extinguished before 1 p.m., though cars had to wait their turn to creep past the scene in just one direction at a time throughout the early afternoon.

Butcher said the job was treated as a hazardous materials incident (involving a special unit adding to scores of fire engines and police cars parked along the highway's eastbound lane) but that firefighting operations were standard as for any other working fire.

"We're treating this as a hazmat incident but we're fighting it as we would fight any other fire," Butcher said.

http://www.niagara-gazette.com/crime/local_story_201190856.html

USA, NY, NORTH TONAWANDA

JULY 21 2009.

WORKERS SPARK FIRE IN ABANDONED FUEL TANK

Eight fire companies fought back flames Monday morning on River Road after crews dismantling an abandoned 50-foot-tall fuel tank sparked the fire with a blow torch, town officials said. About 50 firefighters kept the blaze confined to the huge but mostly empty storage tank after hours of using a flame retarding foam on the structure, which was once used as a fuel distribution point for a long-defunct business at 5335 River Road.

"We have a five million gallon tank that is being dismantled and the demolition team was attempting to cut it ... at some point the fire started," Grand Island Fire Chief Greg Butcher said.

About 4,500 gallons of "petroleum sludge" was barely enough to register in the massive above-ground container, he said, and a "floating lid" inside the structure indicated it was empty by industry standards.

Nevertheless the fire was reported just after 9 a.m. by a crew hired by the town last month. The work involved using a cutting torch to dismantle the tank, part of a broad and varied push by the Town of Tonawanda council and other redevelopment interests to make way for future development along the Niagara River.

The former business, once variously attached to the name Kinetic Labs, Elmer Goetz Oil Company and Frontier Oil, hasn't been in operation for possibly the past 30 years. The industrial hulk is currently foreclosed and is Erie County property.

"Basically it was a terminal, it had more than one storage tank right now there's just one remaining ..." said Bob Dimmig executive director of the Town of Tonawanda's development corporation.

A \$50,000 grant the town pulled in last month was used to fund a low bid by Op-Tech Environmental Services, Inc. to handle the demolition, including the storage tank, a vacant office and storage building.

Fire officials tentatively deemed the blaze extinguished before 1 p.m., though cars had to wait their turn to
508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

creep past the scene in just one direction at a time throughout the early afternoon.

Butcher said the job was treated as a hazardous materials incident, involving a special unit adding to scores of fire engines and police cars parked along the highway's eastbound lane, but that firefighting operations were standard as for any working fire.

"We're treating this as a hazmat incident but we're fighting it as we would fight any other fire," Butcher said.

The eight companies called to respond, including several from the town, the City of Tonawanda and Grand Island, is also standard for any fire originating in the town's old industrial core, he said.

Butcher likened the fire to a similar one at the neighboring Tonawanda Coke facility almost exactly one year ago, when a cutting torch also ignited a tank containing flammable residue. No one was hurt in the fire Monday nor as a result of putting it out, he confirmed.

Town of Tonawanda Councilman John Bargnesi said the demolition must be done before environmental testing is eventually conducted at the site. The council for about four years has focused on cleaning up the surrounding chunk of industrial property, which sits along the scenic banks of the Niagara River.

"It changed hands so many times," Bargnesi said of the property. "It's been abandoned for at least 20 years if not longer ... This was a huge step for that parcel in getting those tanks down ... if we get it cleaned up it opens up the second property that's behind it. It's huge in the way of redevelopment of brownfields there. ... Besides just the cleanup in general, you just kind of put it in the big picture, that stretch of River Road from the Grand Island bridge to the City of Tonawanda line, that is one of the last undeveloped industrial sections of the town."

Dimmig said the property is part of about 300 acres pegged for redevelopment along the river. Two-thirds of that includes a state Empire Zone. It sits next to the 175-acre Riverview Commerce Park, developers of which have also been pushing for the new land-use plans for the blighted industrial site.

<http://www.firefightingnews.com/article.cfm?articleID=68328>