

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

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

USA, CA, SANTA BARBARA

NOVEMBER 28 2008.

GREKA SPILLS NEAR LOS OLIVOS

Colby Frazier

Santa Barbara County Fire crews responded to a crude oil spill Monday at a Greka Oil and Gas Inc. facility at 5017 Zaca Station Road near Los Olivos.

County Fire Capt. Eli Iskow said Greka employees estimated 15 barrels, or 630 gallons spilled. However, he said a county hazardous materials specialist said the spill likely reached 350 to 400 barrels, or nearly 16,800 gallons.

Iskow said the spill was confined to a concrete-lined containment pond and vacuum trucks were sucking up the spillage when fire crews arrived on the scene.

"It was not a catastrophic environmental emergency because the material never left the containment," he said.

The spill occurred at the company's Davis Tank Battery, located on property that's part of the Firestone Vineyard.

This site was the scene of a massive oil spill on Jan. 5 of this year that spewed 84,000 gallons of crude oil into a nearby creek.

That spill arrived on the heels of several other large incidents that prompted Santa Barbara County officials to clamp down on the spill-plagued company. After nearly a year of hearings, the Board of Supervisors last month adopted stricter petroleum ordinances to deal with high-risk offenders.

As of last January, county agencies had responded to more than 400 incidents at Greka facilities in the company's eight-year stint here. Each response reportedly costs taxpayers roughly \$450 per hour.

Greka also drew heat from Assemblyman Pedro Nava, who drafted two state laws that gives the California Department of Fish and Game the power to shut down spill-prone companies in the event they show a record of noncompliance.

Iskow said the cause of Monday's spill remains under investigation. He said it appeared mechanical problems with an injection pump, valve, tank volume alarms, or operator error could have caused the spill.

Attempts to reach Greka officials for comment were not successful last night.

<http://www.thedailysound.com/112708GrekaSpill>

USA, KY, LIVERMORE

NOVEMBER 30 2008.

EXPLOSION BLOWS TOP OFF OIL TANK

Firefighters believe static electricity may have caused the explosion that blew off the top of an oil tank and caught another on fire Saturday near Livermore, Ky.

The explosion happened at 3 p.m. at battery of oil tanks located on US 431 North behind the B.F. Evans Ford dealership north of the McLean County town, according to emergency dispatchers there.

Nobody was injured and there was no property damage beyond the oil tanks, said David Sunn, McLean County Emergency Management Agency Director.

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"It probably woke a lot of people up from their Saturday afternoon naps," he said. "It blew the top off the tank, 150 to 200 feet, but it landed out in a field."

He said an official cause won't be known until Kentucky fire investigators can examine the fire scene but local firefighters believed static electricity was most likely the culprit.

Firefighters from the Livermore and McLean County Eastern Fire District departments were first on scene.

They quickly put out the fire, although with unconventional methods for an oil fire.

"They just used water. You're not really supposed to put out an oil fire with water but they used enough to smother it. They did a magnificent job," Sunn said.

The firefighters kept the blaze from spreading to the remaining seven tanks in the battery. The fire was put out in about 45 minutes, Sunn said.

The tanks are owned by a company called Ohio Valley Energy, he said.

Sunn said the incident caused no environmental damage.

"There was no contamination or run-off. It was all contained in the berm around the tanks," he said.

<http://www.courierpress.com/news/2008/nov/29/29web-McLean/>

USA, CA, IDYLLWILD

DECEMBER 3 2008.

NO INJURIES REPORTED IN EXPLOSION AT IDYLLWILD PROPANE STORAGE FACILITY

Julia Glick

An explosion at a propane storage facility in Idyllwild shot flames 40 feet into the air Sunday morning, scorching a nearby mobile home and burning off the end of a worker's moustache, firefighters said.

No injuries were reported in the blaze about 7:20 a.m. near Pine Crest Avenue and Maranatha Drive.

Idyllwild firefighters were sipping coffee at the town fire station a few hundred yards away when they saw the blaze through the kitchen window, said Capt. James Manietta.

"It's hard to miss a fireball that big," Manietta said, adding that some residents said they felt the ground shake.

The driver of a 5,000-gallon transport truck was unloading propane into a massive tank at Suburban Propane, when the blast occurred. The driver was unharmed, but he lost about an inch of his moustache, Manietta said.

The flames ignited spot fires at a nearby mobile home park, searing part of one home, Manietta said.

Residents came out of their homes with garden hoses to help extinguish burning pine needles and other ground cover.

Idyllwild firefighters and Cal Fire/Riverside County Fire Department had the blaze and spot fires under control within about five minutes, Manietta said.

Recent rains moistened the dry earth and helped prevent the fire's spread, he added.

Firefighters are still investigating the cause of the explosion and do not yet have an estimate of the damage, he said. Firefighters did not release the driver's name Sunday.

http://www.pe.com/localnews/inland/stories/PE_News_Local_S_fireball01.4100675.html

USA, PA, JOHNSTOWN

DECEMBER 5 2008.

STATIC ELECTRICITY TO BLAME FOR GAS STATION FIRE

Officials said static electricity caused a flash fire at a gas station that left a man hospitalized.

Wednesday's fire at the Sheetz store in Jackson Township happened while the man was cleaning an underground tank.

The man, who is employed by ECS&R and was hired by Sheetz, remains in the burn unit of a Pittsburgh hospital. Officials said his injuries do not appear to be life-threatening.

The fire along Route 22 near Nanty Glo remains under investigation. Fire officials said the man was burned when flames ignited underground, traveled up through the pipe and burned him while he was above ground.

Crews reminded people to take care around any flammable liquid because sparks are a real possibility. Gas cans should be placed on the ground while being filled, as opposed to in the bed of a truck where there is more static.

Last year, a gas station exploded in West Virginia, possibly due to static electricity. At that time, four people were killed and five others injured.

<http://www.wjactv.com/news/18204882/detail.html>

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USA, WASHINGTON

DECEMBER 6 2008.

JUSTICE DEPT. SAYS PENTAGON MUST COMPLY WITH EPA CLEANUP ORDERS

Lyndsey Layton

The Justice Department dealt a blow to the Pentagon this week, saying it has no legal authority to resist orders from the Environmental Protection Agency to clean up Fort Meade in Maryland and two other military sites that have been contaminated by chemicals.

In a Dec. 1 letter obtained by The Washington Post, Steven G. Bradbury, principal deputy assistant attorney general at Justice, said that the Pentagon had no legal grounds to resist the cleanup orders from the EPA.

The cleanup agreements drafted by the EPA for nine other sites contain "extensive provisions" that Pentagon officials said were unacceptable. But Bradbury wrote that the EPA had the legal authority to demand additional terms.

The letter was celebrated by critics of the Pentagon, the nation's largest polluter.

"Even the Bush Department of Justice is now telling the Department of Defense that it is not above the law and it cannot flaunt EPA's final orders," said Rep. John D. Dingell (D-Mich.), chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, in a statement yesterday. "If this were a private polluter, they probably would have been hauled into court by now."

The EPA issued "final orders" to the Pentagon more than a year ago to clean up Fort Meade, McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey and Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida. Final orders are the agency's most potent enforcement tool. If a polluter does not comply, the agency usually can go to court to force action and can impose fines up to \$28,000 a day.

But the Pentagon questioned whether the EPA had legal authority to require and oversee the mitigation. Defense officials also declined to sign legally required agreements with the EPA covering nine other military sites on the Superfund list of the most polluted places in the country. The contracts would spell out a remediation plan, set schedules, and allow the EPA to oversee the work and assess penalties if milestones are missed.

The EPA declined to take legal action against another department within the Bush administration, so the standoff created a kind of regulatory limbo. Outraged Democrats on Capitol Hill accused the Defense Department of flouting environmental regulations and the EPA of failing to enforce those laws.

"The bottom line is that somebody needs to make sure the ground and the groundwater is clean in those areas, and as long as the Pentagon ignores the Environmental Protection Agency, it will continue to be delayed," said Sen. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.).

EPA officials said yesterday that they were pleased with the backing from the Justice Department and expected the Pentagon to move "quickly" to clean up the three bases and sign agreements to fix the other nine military sites.

Cmdr. Darryn James, a Pentagon spokesman, said the Defense Department was "still evaluating the letter, but let there be no doubt that the DOD is committed to protecting the environment and signing interagency agreements . . . at each of these sites."

But some are skeptical that the Pentagon will sign the agreements with the EPA and comply anytime soon.

Maryland Attorney General Douglas F. Gansler announced plans in August to sue the Army to enforce the EPA cleanup order at Fort Meade.

For more than a decade, EPA officials have detected contaminants, some known to cause cancer and other health problems, at Fort Meade and other military sites. Army, EPA and Maryland officials have been working for years to clean up the pollution.

Shari Wilson, Maryland's environment secretary, said yesterday that the state intends to ahead with its legal action despite the findings of the Justice Department.

"We're hoping this will make the difference, but we are very intent on using whatever tools are available to us to get this resolved," Wilson said.

She said the Army has been negotiating with Maryland about cleanup efforts at Fort Meade for years but progress has been sporadic. Maryland officials want the Army to commit to a binding agreement to clean up Fort Meade and want the EPA to enforce it.

Congress established the Superfund program in 1980 to clean up the country's most contaminated places, and of the 1,255 sites on the list, the Pentagon has 129 -- the most of any entity. Other federal agencies with properties on the list include NASA and the Energy Department, but they have signed EPA cleanup agreements without protest.

The law was amended in 1986 to stipulate that polluting government agencies should be treated the same as
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any private entity. During the 2000 presidential campaign, George W. Bush pledged to direct all federal facilities to comply with environmental laws and "make them accountable."

In dealing with cleanup efforts, some military branches have been more cooperative than others. The Navy has signed cleanup agreements for all of its Superfund sites, whereas the Air Force has not signed one in 14 years.

Superfund sites are not the only Pentagon environmental problem. It has about 25,000 contaminated properties spread among all 50 states, and it will cost billions and take decades to clean them up.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/12/04/AR2008120403653.html>

USA, PA, PHILADELPHIA

DECEMBER 6 2008.

OFFICIALS: TANK CAN'T BE MADE COMPLIANT FOR LESS THAN \$10K

Gema Maria Duarte

There's no way an illegal fuel tank owned by borough government in Bristol can be brought into state compliance for less than \$10,000, despite what Councilman Jim Lutz says.

That's the view of Council President Ralph DiGuseppe and borough inspector John Miller.

In September, Lutz said he believed that the above-ground gasoline storage tank that sits behind borough hall could be moved and brought into compliance for less than \$10,000. That was his response to a \$130,000 estimate the borough received from Bayard Pump & Tank Co. to install a state-approved underground gasoline storage system.

At the October work session, Lutz presented to council a \$29,000 estimate — not including labor costs — from Eugene O'Brien of Core Engineered Solution Co. Given the significant lower cost, the council agreed to bring in O'Brien to tour the tank facility.

After that visit on Nov. 11, O'Brien agreed with the initial \$130,000 estimate for an underground tank, the memo states. He estimated about \$64,720 for an aboveground tank, that's not including prep work, which might be an additional \$20,000, officials said.

"[O'Brien] stated that there was no plausible way the [gasoline tank] could be purchased for [\$10,000], let alone installed," reads Miller's memo to council dated Dec. 1.

But Lutz still disagrees.

"These figures have been inflated," Lutz said Thursday afternoon. "It was \$30,000 with the bells and whistles and all."

"These are not bells and whistles," DiGuseppe said. "They are needed. We just can't install a tank anywhere we want. We have to go through the proper procedures set by the state. All of that costs money."

Problems with the tank arose in late June when the borough's gasoline provider refused to continue fueling it because of safety concerns with a cement shed housing the tank behind borough hall. For years, previous providers delivered fuel and never noted safety concerns.

The borough didn't have any paperwork of the tank installation or permits from the Department of Environmental Protection or the Department of Labor and Industry as required by law. A fuel storage tank can't be installed inside a building unless it is an approved commercial, industrial or processing facility, according to guidelines set by the labor and industry. That isn't the case with Bristol's tank, which sits close to houses on Wood Street.

Throughout the summer, representatives from both agencies and a certified inspector checked the facility for safety and environmental issues. Several violations were found such as inappropriate ventilation and the distance of the tank and pump from buildings.

The DEP told the borough that to comply with state environmental standards, the tank must be registered with the agency, enrolled in a maintenance program, a mechanism must be installed to reduce vapors and a certified tank inspection obtained by a third party.

Since then, the borough has been researching the financial feasibility to correct the problem.

The tank was installed by former borough manager Fidel Esposito in 1999 without permits or inspection from either agency as required by law.

Borough vehicles had been fueled through a secured opening and a hose, but that practice was stopped in the summer after the borough was cited.

In late September, borough officials met with Bayard Pump & Tank Co. of Bristol to discuss four options to the financial feasibility of fixing the tank setting or buying a new fuel system.

Option one: convert the building into a "vault type" structure that would be able to hold an explosion. That may help obtain state waivers. That calls for installing a concrete roof and side walls as reinforcement. The tank has to

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go through vapor recovery, and leak and overflow protection. Before a cost can be given, engineering studies are needed.

Option two: remove and move the tank to another location and modify equipment, which would cost from \$48,000 to \$53,000. That doesn't include moving expenses or the cost to demolish it or fix it, if the council chose to.

Option three: install a new aboveground tank and dispensing system for about \$100,000. This includes labor and state permits.

Option four: install an underground tank for \$130,000. This option allows the tank to be installed behind the borough hall.

The memo also noted the existing tank can be sold.

"The tank must still be good if they are considering selling it," Lutz said. "Just move it and end it."

<http://www.phillyburbs.com/pb-dyn/news/111-12052008-1632899.html>

USA, TX, AUSTIN

DECEMBER 7 2008.

AFTER 15 YEARS, EAST AUSTIN FUEL-STORAGE FIELD DECLARED CLEAN ECO-BATTLE TO CLOSE IT SEEN AS A MILESTONE; NOW COMES QUESTION OF WHAT WILL REPLACE IT.

Marty Toohey

When Janie Rangel drives her white Dodge Caravan to work, she passes a huge field covered by weeds and old buildings and wonders when someone will finally pave over the place's troubled past.

The field, in East Austin, was once occupied by a cluster of giant cylinders that held most of the gasoline sold in the Austin area. Neighbors dubbed the facility "the tank farm" and considered it a symbol of the east side's status as a dumping ground for the rest of Austin.

When neighbors learned in the early 1990s that the tank farm was emitting what activists and public officials considered dangerous levels of pollution into the ground, water and air, they organized in opposition to it. Faced with intense public pressure and the threat of lawsuits, the six oil companies operating the facility agreed to close it — leading to a sense among East Austin activists that such fights could be won.

Victory gave way to frustration at the pace of the cleanup. But now, 15 years after the facility closed, Rangel is cautiously optimistic that the wait will soon be over.

The tank farm, state regulators have determined, has been cleaned up.

There are still trace amounts of pollutants such as benzene on the property, but not enough to pose a health risk, according to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. The findings clear the way for the property to be sold and developed.

No one can say with certainty what it will become. But it's a prime location, at the intersection of Airport Boulevard and Springdale Road, in fast-developing East Austin. Rumors range from doctors' offices to boutique shops to a commuter rail stop.

"If the tank farm really has been cleaned up, we want it to be something that serves the neighborhood," Rangel said, touching on concerns that linger among some tank-farm neighbors.

Rangel has spent all her 58 years in East Austin, much of that near the tank farm, a 52-acre facility operated by Exxon, Chevron, Star Enterprises, Coastal States Gas, Citgo and Mobil. Aerial photographs taken in the early 1950s, about the time the facility opened, show that it was surrounded by fields. They quickly grew into neighborhoods.

Two decades ago, Rangel recalls, her then-10-year-old daughter, Micky, would stuff her teddy bear into a backpack whenever a siren went off nearby, telling her mother, "It's an evacuation." Rangel would assure her daughter that nothing was wrong at the tank farm. Worry did no good.

"There's no way we could get out in time to beat an explosion anyway," she said recently.

Most neighbors disliked the facility, which stored 10 million gallons of gasoline piped in from Gulf Coast refineries.

But, Rangel said, they didn't realize it could be leaking pollutants until tank-farm neighbor Sylvia Herrera read a public notice in the Austin American-Statesman. Mobil, according to the notice, wanted to expand its terminal. Among the chemicals it discharged were MTBE, a suspected carcinogen, and benzene, a gasoline byproduct that can cause headaches, nausea, upper-respiratory infections and cancer.

She and Susana Almanza, an East Austin activist, began gathering records. The two soon found a history of pipeline breaks, loading spills and other leaks involving tens of thousands of gallons.

They also surveyed neighbors, who complained of frequent and severe headaches, nose bleeds and even high

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rates of infant mortality. Older residents noted that a pecan grove on the site seemed to sicken after the tank farm opened.

An American-Statesman survey of 1,153 tank-farm neighbors, released in May 1992, found similar problems, and its results were supported by Austin doctors and a computer analysis of state Medicaid records. The closer neighbors lived to the terminals, the more acute their complaints.

Almanza and Herrera formed People Organized in Defense of Earth and Her Resources , a mostly Hispanic activist group, and began working with the mostly black East Austin Strategy Team .

They rallied neighbors and elected officials.

Eventually, Travis County set aside \$250,000 to investigate the tank farm. Then-County Attorney Ken Oden told the oil companies they would face civil and criminal charges if they didn't shut it down. Five of them closed in fall 1992.

Exxon held out the longest. Activists scheduled a protest in Houston for Feb. 18, 1993 . That day Exxon announced it, too, would close its operation.

A jubilant news conference followed. Fidelina Rivera, who served as a spokeswoman for residents who spoke little English, joined hands with other neighbors and raised them in triumph.

"That was a turning point for East Austin," says Ron Davis , who was head of the East Austin Strategy Team at the time and is now a county commissioner.

The oil companies have maintained that the tank farm never posed health or environmental hazards. Neighbors blamed it for various maladies, but state health officials never definitively linked them to the contaminants.

Still, in 1996 more than 200 families , individuals and businesses won a \$5.6 million settlement from the companies, which did not admit liability.

Meanwhile, the cleanup proceeded slowly.

On the property, the companies trucked soil and water elsewhere for cleanup. Off site, they set up monitoring stations and relied on mother nature's ability to break down chemicals into nontoxic forms.

Post-closure testing had found groundwater pollution extended beneath about two dozen homes in the surrounding neighborhoods and as far as Govalle Park, about a quarter-mile from the tank farm. In some cases, off-site benzene levels exceeded federal drinking-water standards by 200 percent , according to state testing.

But the oil companies and state regulators said the water pollution posed no immediate threat because it was at least 15 feet below the surface and not spreading. The neighborhood is on city drinking water, and Exxon purchased the wells in the surrounding area and capped them.

Deborah Edwards , a consultant hired by the oil companies to oversee the cleanup, says the chemicals that remain are not migrating and pose no danger to the neighbors.

Some pollution remains on the tank farm property itself.

The state does not require the companies to remove it all. State law sets two standards for such cleanups.

The higher would have required the companies to remove almost all the pollutants. That is the standard necessary to build homes on the property. It is the standard the oil companies were held to in cleaning up the area around the tank farm.

The oil companies chose a lower standard for the tank farm itself. They are allowed to leave more pollution on the site as long as the chemicals will not migrate onto surrounding properties.

That standard also limits the property to commercial uses. The thinking: People who only work there won't accumulate enough toxins in their bodies to face health risks.

Earlier this year, the state environmental commission began declaring that the oil companies had met the various requirements. The decision clears the companies of most liability.

Chuck Lesniak , a manager in the city's Watershed Protection Division , said the state's evaluation is sound.

"We're satisfied that the standards are appropriate and the standards have been met," Lesniak told neighbors at an October community meeting in the cafeteria of Govalle Elementary School , a tank-farm neighbor. "From my personal perspective, the cleanup is protective of the people and the environment."

Almanza, who has bird-dogged the cleanup process, agreed.

Some of the audience were skeptical. Paul Rodgers was among those who said the state has a history of lax enforcement and shouldn't be trusted. "Y'all are saying everything," Hugh Mayfield told the officials that night, "but nothing."

Rangel said she's skeptical that the tank farm has been adequately cleansed. But she said whatever the result of the cleanup is, it is done, and her bigger concern is what the property will become.

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The giant cylinders have been removed from the site. So have most of the pipes that crisscrossed the property. Austin's gasoline is now supplied mostly by a terminal in eastern Travis County operated by Koch Industries . Pieces of the tank farm have already been sold.

One corner is being used for a car dealership, transmission shops and an assortment of similar businesses — and Rangel says she doesn't want any more of them.

"We've got enough of that on the east side," Rangel said.

Almanza said she has surveyed neighbors and found similar sentiments. The top choices, Almanza said: doctor's offices, a child-care or senior center, boutique shops, restaurants, maybe a park.

"If it's something that will help the community," she said, "people will get behind it."

Matt Mathias , an Austin real-estate broker, said he worked with a Florida-based development company that tried for three years to buy various pieces of the tank farm. But the efforts were hampered because of the number of owners involved, Mathias said, and were halted when the national real-estate market turned sour.

"The short story," he said, "is there's not a lot going on right now with that property that I know of."

One rumor, which surfaced at the community meeting, is that Capital Metro is thinking about building a commuter rail stop on the property.

Capital Metro owns train tracks that cut through the property. On Monday, the organization proposed using them for a commuter rail line that would run from downtown Austin to Elgin.

But to their knowledge, the tank farm has not even come up in conjunction with the rail line or any other project, said County Commissioner Margaret Gomez and City Councilman Mike Martinez , both of whom sit on Capital Metro's governing board and have significant constituencies in East Austin.

Doug Allen , Capital Metro's chief development officer, said the agency has not considered where the stops would go because its proposal is still in the earliest stages. In response to questions, he said the tank farm could be a candidate.

"It could be a good site," Allen said, "if that's what the city and the neighborhood wants."

Whatever the tank farm ultimately becomes, its legacy is likely to linger. Last year, a new fuel-storage facility, tiny in comparison, was approved just east of the city limits, across the street from Gus Garcia Middle School .

Davis, the activist-turned-county commissioner, angrily declared the new facility was proof that East Austin's problems had not been solved but simply pushed outside the city limits. He marshaled the neighbors with a familiar rallying cry:

"Stop the tank farm."

<http://www.statesman.com/news/content/news/stories/local/12/07/1207tankfarm.html>

AUSTRALIA, NEW SOUTH WALES, NOWRA

DECEMBER 10 2008.

ONE INJURED IN BLAST AT ETHANOL PLANT

One person has been injured in an explosion at the largest ethanol distillery in Australia near Nowra on the New South Wales south coast. Up to nine fire trucks from the NSW Fire Brigade and Rural Fire Service rushed to the Manildra Ethanol plant on the banks of the Shoalhaven River at Bomaderry shortly after 8:00am as a precaution. The Ambulance Service says the injured person was treated for minor injuries at the scene. Police have now reopened the road outside the distillery.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/12/10/2442299.htm>

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USA, OK, WOODWARD

DECEMBER 11 2008,

INDUSTRIAL EXPLOSION IN WOODWARD FORCES EVACUATIONS NO REPORTS OF INJURIES

An industrial explosion in northwest Oklahoma on Wednesday forced evacuations, an emergency official reported.

There have been no reports of injuries after oil tank batteries exploded northwest of Woodward, said Woodward County Emergency Management Director Matt Lehenbauer.

He said two of them exploded, a third had its top rupture and a fourth is still sealed. Crews are at the scene spraying water on it.

All businesses in the area were evacuated, and residents living within a quarter mile of the area were, too.

Investigators are at the scene, as are a hazmat unit and the Woodward Fire Department.

<http://www.koco.com/news/18245092/detail.html>

USA, WI, MILWAUKEE

DECEMBER 12 2008.

GAS FROM TANK SPLASHED ON FIREFIGHTERS BEFORE IGNITING, INJURING FIVE

Linda Spice

Three Milwaukee firefighters and two civilians were injured today when gas inside a tank ignited as it was being taken out of a basement where an earlier fire had already been extinguished.

Firefighters responded this morning to 6415 W. Keefe Ave. Parkway, where they found the resident had already put out a small fire in his basement, according to department spokeswoman Tiffany Wynn.

Wynn said the man had been repairing the car gas tank in his basement when the initial fire started. He was able to put it out, but as firefighters arrived and attempted to remove the tank, some gas splashed onto firefighters and ignited through contact with a water heater pilot light, according to Wynn.

One firefighter suffered first- and second-degree burns; a second firefighter had second-degree burns; a third firefighter suffered smoke inhalation. All were taken to hospitals for treatment.

Wynn described the burns to the firefighters as non-life-threatening. The two civilians injured were a man who had a burned thumb and a woman who had smoke inhalation. They were assessed at the scene but declined medical transport. A property damage estimate was not immediately available, but Wynn said it was believed to be minimal.

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/crime/35983939.html>

USA, CA, BAKERSFIELD

DECEMBER 16 2008.

3 OIL TANKS EXPLODE SOUTHEAST OF BAKERSFIELD; NO INJURIES REPORTED

Three oil tanks exploded Monday afternoon at a facility near Redbank Road and Weedpatch Highway, southeast of Bakersfield.

No injuries were immediately reported, and Kern County Fire Department spokesperson Sean Collins said nearby homes weren't being evacuated. The closest houses were about a 300 yards from the fires.

Smoke from the burning tanks could be seen for miles away, and traffic was slowed on busy Weedpatch Highway. Nearby residents said the explosions sounded like bombs that rattled windows.

Fire officials said they planned to let the fires burn themselves out at two large tanks and one smaller tank.

Collins said crews hadn't identified what caused the explosions.

<http://www.bakersfieldnow.com/news/local/36198424.html>

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USA, CT, MIDDLETOWN

DECEMBER 17 2008.

OIL LEAK SPARKED BY OVERFLOWING TANK - INCIDENT OCCURRED ON BROAD STREET, OFFICIALS SAY

An oil tank overflowed in Middletown Tuesday afternoon, causing fire crews to jump into action. Fire officials said East River Energy was filling an underground tank at 70 Broad St. at the time of the incident. They said the 10,000 tank overflowed, causing the problem. They said about 40 gallons of home-heating oil was spilled in the incident. Alpine Environment Services was called to the scene to clean up the spill. Officials said the Department of Environmental Protection would be on hand to monitor the clean-up.

<http://www.wfsb.com/news/18292093/detail.html>

USA, UT, HILL AIR FORCE BASE

DECEMBER 17 2008.

FUEL TANK CLEANUP REMAINS UNRESOLVED

The total environmental impact of about 500 gallons of jet fuel in the Great Salt Lake remains an uncertainty, environmental officials say.

On Friday morning, a 388th Fighter Wing pilot in an F-16 dumped two external fuel tanks into the Great Salt Lake, about three miles north of Antelope Island, after the jet's sensors indicated a fire hazard.

Using the plane's internal fuel system, the pilot safely landed a short time later, but the 18-foot long, 370-gallon tanks were destroyed on impact. The tanks were approximately two-thirds full when they landed in water about a foot deep.

Lynn de Freitas, executive director of Friends of Great Salt Lake, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and preserving the lake, said the impacts are still unknown, but that the Air Force shares in the responsibility to find out.

"It was an obvious place to eject the containers, but it's the responsibility of the military to provide some kind of analysis so we can learn how to mitigate any potential impacts," de Freitas said. "It's all a part of what we don't know that turns it into a concern."

De Freitas said any time a hazardous material enters a wildlife area, there is cause for concern.

Shortly after the incident, Hill Air Force Base emergency response teams coordinated with local authorities to recover the tanks and clean up any excess fuel.

"Initially, there was a plan to burn off the remaining jet fuel since it was determined to be the quickest and safest way to clean up the fuel," said Col. Linda Medler, 75th Air Base Wing commander, in a written statement. "However, due to weather and site conditions on Saturday, the team was unsuccessful. As a result, Hill will re-attempt the burn or develop another cleanup alternative."

Medler said the base will work with local environmental agencies to determine whether to burn off the remaining fuel, bring in equipment and pump it out, or let the fuel degrade naturally.

Jeff Salt, director of the Great Salt Lakekeeper, said it's not uncommon for planes to drop fuel into the lake.

"That's standard with the airports around here," he said. "That's their backup plan for emergencies -- it's one of the only places where there aren't any people."

Salt said much of the fuel would likely just evaporate, but whatever didn't would spread out over the surface of the lake, posing a threat to birds in the area.

"The impact is going to be to the birds that might come in contact with the fuel," he said.

Salt said the eared grebe, an aquatic bird that breeds in shallow, highly saline lakes and ponds, would likely be affected and bald eagles could also be impacted. He said any impact to the lake's brine shrimp would be minuscule.

"It is of great concern, but unfortunately, there's not much that can be done to stop it," Salt said. "If there is a legitimate emergency, that's probably the safest bet. Hopefully they aren't just dropping them for practice -- and it would be interesting to see what constitutes an emergency."

Col. Scott Dennis, 388th Fighter Wing commander, said the base only drops fuel like it did on Friday in extreme circumstances and the pilot who dropped the fuel acted "extremely professionally" during the emergency.

"The F-16 does not have the capability to release fuel without jettisoning its external wing tanks," he said.

"The only reason an F-16 pilot would jettison the aircraft's tanks would be in the event of a dire emergency."

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Medler said Hill has been working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Davis County Health Department, Utah Department of Environmental Quality, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and the Antelope Island State Park since the incident happened.

<http://www.standard.net/live/news/158940/>

AUSTRALIA, VICTORIA, MELBOURNE

DECEMBER 18 2008.

MOBIL FUEL LEAK FLOWED FROM ERRORS

A series of blunders by oil company Mobil preceded a massive petrol leak from its pipeline in Newport that forced evacuations, caused serious health problems and threatened the environment.

More than 486,000 litres of unleaded petrol had leaked for about two years before a local resident complained to Mobil in December 2006 about a strong petrol smell.

Within an hour, every Victorian emergency service was at the site, but it took another 11 days before the leak was found in a corroded underground pipeline — one that Mobil had been advised to investigate in 2003.

It was revealed yesterday that Mobil Refining Australia Pty Ltd, which pleaded guilty to causing an environmental hazard, has estimated it will cost the company more than \$13 million for the clean-up.

The company, which was convicted by magistrate Phillip Goldberg, who ordered it to pay \$102,000 in costs, has agreed to spend \$350,000 on local schemes that include \$210,000 to Williamstown High School for the development of a new wetland area.

Melbourne Magistrates Court heard yesterday that an assessment by the company in 2002 had classified in the highest category the risk of a leak from an underground pipeline.

Paul Holdenson, QC, prosecuting, said after Mobil was advised about corrosion, it dug up and repaired a wrong section of the pipeline just five metres from where the leak eventually occurred, overlooked that vent checks had stopped, and fell behind in inspections.

Mr Holdenson, for the Environment Protection Authority, told the court the company also misread or misinterpreted data and deferred work.

He detailed how experts told Mobil in August 2003 that tests of non-internal corrosion features of pipeline, that coincided with where the hole was later discovered, found the wall thickness had been reduced from seven millimetres to 1.6 millimetres.

The leak, which entered the water table from stormwater drains, occurred in the 5.2-kilometre steel pipeline, built in 1954, under Champion Road between the Yarraville terminal and an oil refinery in Altona.

Mr Holdenson said soon after the leak was found, a child-care centre was evacuated, trains were slowed due to fear of an explosion, and residents became ill.

People reported earlier symptoms of headaches, breathing problems, vomiting, numb lips and tongues, and workers who needed protective masks.

The plume of petrol underground had reached about 16 hectares by May 2007.

The plume had earlier flowed into a drain that entered the Jawbone Conservation Reserve.

Mr Holdenson acknowledged Mobil's early guilty plea, which had "certainly facilitated the course of justice".

Ross Ray, QC, for Mobil, conceded there had been "errors of judgement" and "system failures" but they did not involve gross negligence or deliberate contravention of laws.

<http://www.theage.com.au/environment/mobil-fuel-leak-flowed-from-errors-20081217-70t5.html>

USA, CA, VENTURA CO

DECEMBER 18 2008.

WORKER INJURED IN BLAST AT OIL FACILITY

An underground explosion at a Ventura oil facility left a worker injured Wednesday morning.

The worker was 10 feet down a well changing a valve when it exploded, said Ron Oatman, a spokesman for the Ventura County Fire Department.

The worker was treated at the scene and then taken to a local hospital, Oatman said.

The explosion happened at 11:19 a.m. in the 3600 block of Ventura Avenue at a facility owned by Aera Energy. The company bills itself as one of the largest oil and gas producers in California. "Aera produces approximately 175,000 barrels of oil and 59 million cubic feet of natural gas each day," the company's Web site says.

Emergency personnel remained at the site throughout the afternoon trying to gauge gas levels in the well.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

"We need to see if it's safe to work down there," Oatman said.

He added no toxic material was detected outside the well.

<http://www.venturacountystar.com/news/2008/dec/18/worker-injured-in-blast-at-oil-facility/>

PAKISTAN, KARACHI

DECEMBER 19 2008.

90 FEET HIGH FOUNTAIN OF OIL DRENCHES KORANGI AREA AFTER PIPELINE BURSTS: IT'S RAINING OIL!

A Pak Arab Refinery Company (PARCO) oil pipeline burst in the Korangi residential area on Wednesday evening, creating panic amongst and problems for residents.

The incident occurred around 6:45 pm when a Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) team was doing repair work and accidentally hit an oil pipeline causing it to crack. An approximately 90-foot high fountain of oil erupted from the pipeline, residents claimed. Soon, oil spread all over the residential area and the houses and it kept spewing for nearly two hours.

Heavy contingents of police and Rangers arrived at the scene and secured the area. The PARCO crew, local administration, fire brigade department and ambulances from different welfare associations also arrived at the scene. At least 300 people participated in the rescue work.

It is pertinent to mention here that, at least, one thousand houses are located in the area and around 500 houses were completely affected by the incident. The houses were deep in, at least, 10 inches of oil.

The area's power supply was cut off in view of any possible outburst of intense conflagration. Announcements are being made for people to strictly avoid lighting matches, stoves, cigarettes, lighters or candles. The 800 kilometer long pipeline from Korangi in Karachi to Muzaffar Gardh was crushed some 1.5 inch during the repair work. It is believed that PARCO has suffered a great loss with the waste of hundreds of liters of oil.

According to PARCO officials, oil supply through the damaged line was immediately stopped but they could not predict how long it will take to repair the line. The residents of the area, with the help of rescue teams, were shifted to safer places and people moving towards the site were stopped from accessing the affected area. The residents of the area claimed that spilled oil has made its way into their houses.

"SSGC staffers are responsible for this," said DSP Fakharul Islam. "They mistakenly hit the oil pipeline causing it to burst." Sources revealed that taking strict notice, the Sindh government decided that the incident is a result of the negligence and carelessness of the SSCG team and warned them that strict actions will be taken against them, including fines.

The local administration of the area urged on immediately starting relief activities, as the fierce gale forced the oil to spread all over the area. The administration stated that nobody took the city government's permission before starting the repair work, which involved excavation, they added, calling for the registration of an FIR against those responsible. All roads leading to the affected site have been blocked, causing massive traffic jams on Korangi-bound roads. Heavy machineries were called for and work of dumping sand on the spilled oil has been started. CDGK has called scores of trucks loaded with clay to remove the lubricant from the roads and an inquiry committee has been formed to probe the case, as the SSGC is being accused.

SSGC Media Relations Manager Inayatullah Ismail told Daily Times that the crew was engaged in the installation of a Town Border Station when the incident occurred.

According to him, the incident was not necessarily caused due to the SSGC team's actions, stating that it is possible that the pipeline burst due to an increase in pressure or any other technical fault.

Explaining why the SSGC did not obtain permission from the CDGK, he said that, since the team was not damaging the road, permission was not necessary. "All this confusion can only be cleared after the completion of rescue work," said Ismail.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C12%5C18%5Cstory_18-12-2008_pg12_1

USA, VA, NORFOLK

DECEMBER 23 2008.

CHESAPEAKE ORDERS FERTILIZER TANK DRAINED OVER FAULTY WELDS

Mike Saewitz

City officials on Monday ordered Allied Terminals to drain a large liquid fertilizer storage tank after discovering welding defects similar to the ones that likely caused a nearby tank to collapse last month.

Allied Terminals tank 209, which can store more than 2 million gallons of liquid fertilizer and is within 250 feet 453, 454, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

of nearby homes, has been declared an unsafe structure that poses an "imminent threat to public safety," according to a letter Monday from Chesapeake Fire Chief Steve Best.

At least six welding deficiencies have been discovered on tank 209, and they are similar to the defects that likely caused the collapse of tank 201 at the Allied Terminals facility, Best wrote. The tank must be emptied within 15 days.

"Wonderful," said Chakeeta Rivers, who lives on Banks Street within a few hundred feet of tank 209. "I think I can sleep better at night now."

Allied Terminals may have known about welding defects on some of its tanks at least four years before the collapse last month that spilled 2 million gallons of liquid fertilizer, the head of the U.S. Chemical Safety Board said Monday.

Some of the welding defects on tank 209 date to reports from 2004, documents show. Officials from the U.S. Chemical Safety Board, which is investigating the Nov. 12 collapse, said they obtained the 2004 reports from another company after Allied Terminals had trouble locating them.

"Part of our investigation will be, 'What did they know and when did they know it?' " said John S. Bresland, chairman of the U.S. Chemical Safety Board.

Bresland said he was dissatisfied with Allied Terminals' response to the safety board's urgent recommendations Dec. 8 to safeguard three other fertilizer tanks, which includes tank 209, with similar welding defects. Robert Hall, the safety board's lead investigator for this case, said that to his knowledge Allied hadn't lowered product levels in the tanks since the recommendations were made.

As for tank 209, the one that was declared unsafe Monday, Allied said in its response to the safety board's urgent recommendations that it would "remove the fertilizer from the tank as fast as their customer shipping orders would permit," Bresland said.

"To us, that seemed like a vague commitment," he said.

Allied Terminals executives have said they took prompt action to comply with the board's recommendations, including lowering the amount of liquid fertilizer in the three tanks with the welding defects. Allied Terminals Executive Vice President Bruce Law, who usually responds to media inquiries by e-mail, did not respond to questions sent to him near the end of the business day Monday.

Earlier this month, the safety board determined that welding defects likely played a major role in the collapse of tank 201 on Nov. 12. Four people were injured. The spill sent liquid fertilizer rushing into the South Hill neighborhood and into the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River.

City Manager William Harrell said Monday that Chesapeake would likely have more meetings with the residents of South Hill, who are surrounded by about two dozen Allied Terminals fuel and fertilizer tanks. Members of a city task force created after the collapse were in South Hill on Monday handing out notices detailing the latest development in the case.

The city has been trying to find an industrial buyer for the neighborhood of about 30 homes.

Rivers, the South Hill resident, said she was glad the city pressed Allied Terminals to empty the tank. "They're putting the heat on them now, which is wonderful," she said.

<http://hamptonroads.com/2008/12/citing-safety-chesapeake-orders-fertilizer-tank-drained>