

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

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

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

## **USA, MA, INDIAN ORCHARD**

**JANUARY 21 2012.**

### **60-GALLON CHEMICAL SPILL TRIGGERS HAZ-MAT RESPONSE AT SOLUTIA PLANT IN INDIAN ORCHARD**

*Patrick Johnson*

A spill involving 60 gallons of flammable chemicals at the Solutia compound in Indian Orchard triggered a hazardous materials response from the Springfield Fire Department, officials said.

Springfield Fire Department spokesman Dennis Leger said the spill, reported at 2:44 p.m., was contained inside a concrete holding basin and there was little danger to the public. Workers at the plant at 730 Worcester St. were not evacuated.

There were no injuries.

The spill involved a mixture of the chemicals ethanol, butanol and formaldehyde that Leger said was considered a flammable hazard.

The mixture was diluted with water until it was no longer flammable and then pumped into another tank, he said. The spill was at the Solutia property but did not involve Solutia employees, said company spokesman Erin Shetler. It involved employees with Ineos Melamines, a separate company that occupies space at the Solutia compound.

Operations director Scott Hansen said the company did followed all proper procedures when its employees noticed the leak. Calls were made to the state Department of Environmental Protection and Springfield Fire Department.

Employees were in the process of relining a 20,000-gallon tank when they discovered the gasket for a 24-inch manway on the tank was leaking. The tank had about 5,000 gallons of the chemical in it, he said. Workers drained the tank to bring the fluid level below the leak, he said.

Employees will replace the gasket on Friday, he said.

[http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2012/01/60-gallon\\_chemical\\_spill\\_trigg.html](http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2012/01/60-gallon_chemical_spill_trigg.html)

## **USA, N.J, GLOUCESTER CO, WASHINGTON TWP**

**JANUARY 21 2012.**

### **SPILL HAD A 12-HOUR HEAD START**

*Michelle Caffrey*

Dozens of concerned citizens, township Environmental Commission members and town officials gathered at the municipal building's council chambers on Thursday night to discuss the spill of 26,000 gallons of diesel fuel into Grenloch Lake, Blackwood lake and surrounding waterways.

Much of the focus was directed at the NJ Transit officials in attendance, as they explained the source, timeline and reasons for the spill.

Representatives from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection were also in attendance to explain the procedures for the cleanup and environmental impact.

NJ Transit officials attributed the spill to a burst gasket on the two 20,000-gallon fuel tanks located in front of their facility on Route 42. During the meeting, they revealed that the gasket actually burst at around 8 p.m. on Wednesday night, a full 12 hours before the Washington Township Fire Department was on the scene to contain the spills already noticeable in Grenloch lake.

804, 805, 806, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815

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An alarm to notify the NJ Transit facility that there was a problem with the tanks at the time of the burst gasket went unnoticed. Joyce Gallagher, vice president of NJ Transit's bus facilities, said that the position of the alarm panel in the garage was blocked from view by the buses. It was only a visual, not audible, alarm and did not repeat. An alternate alarm is located in the foreman's office, but it also went unnoticed and it reset automatically.

It wasn't until 1 a.m., when workers at the garage were unable to get fuel from their pumps, that they realized there was an issue.

"They believed it was a distribution problem and moved operations to another garage," Gallagher said. At 6 a.m., the facility contacted their repair company to come investigate the problem with the pumps.

Gallagher estimated that it was between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 8 a.m. on Thursday morning that workers realized there was diesel fuel coming up through the ground.

Gallagher attributed the delay to the heavy rainfalls that hit the area the previous night and into Thursday morning.

"They couldn't see it flowing due to the torrential rain. If it was any other day, one of the drivers would've seen it," Gallagher said.

While all but 1,000 gallons of the tanks were emptied, flowing above ground, down stream paths into the waterways, there was no noticeable odor in the NJ Transit facility at that time.

There was, however, an odor that was detected by the residents surrounding the affected waterways. Fire District Chief John Hoffman said that the Gloucester Township and the Washington Township fire departments were on the scene at around 8 a.m. to respond to complaints of fuel odors in the air. Once they saw the oil sheen on the lake, they called for more resources and set up a joint command center at Gloucester County's Lakeland Complex. They soon realized where the spill was coming from.

"We knew at that point that it was quite bigger of an incident that we'd normally deal with," Hoffman said.

Officials attributed the township's quick response, setting up absorbent booms and containment devices inside the lakes as having being crucial to prevent further contamination.

Municipal officials and residents grilled the NJ Transit representatives about the exact details of when the spill was noticed, who was notified and when.

"There seems to be a little bit of a time loss between being notified and the fire department tracing it up from Grenloch Lake," Business Administrator Bob Smith said.

The Chief of Government and External Affairs for NJ Transit Paul Wyckoff responded, saying that those are "questions that we need to answer so we can learn lessons from them."

Gallagher said that the tanks dated back to 1987 when the building was constructed, and they were scheduled to be replaced next year. That timeline has since been speeded up. The alarms that failed to notify the facility about the leak will be replaced as soon as possible. New systems have already been ordered, and will be installed as soon as they arrive.

Cleanup efforts have recovered 8,933 gallons of oil from the waterways, as well as 437 tons of oil-saturated soil. Another 8.7 tons of contaminated debris were collected, as well.

Residents were concerned about the effect on the wells surrounding the lakes. While the officials said that the municipal wells are located so deep underground they wouldn't be affected, residents' older wells, before 1978, are not on any municipal or state plans and could be higher up in the ground. Tim Maguire, hydrogeologist for the DEP, said that they will be out in the area Friday morning to collect water samples at 15 sites around the waterways for further testing. They are also collecting addresses of residents with concerns that their wells may be affected.

Sarah Tegtmeier from the Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research group, which has been handling the effect on wildlife in the area, said that the effects on the wildlife were minimal.

"We're seeing a lot of very clean birds, most are moderately to lightly impacted," she said. So far they have cleaned 15 geese, two ducks, four turtles and one muskrat. Two beavers, three geese and a muskrat died as a result of the spill.

While Martin Judd, from NJ Transit's Environmental Services, said that there is no concerns that current fish or the spring restocking of fish in the lake will be affected by the spill – the light diesel fuel stays on the surface of the water – they are unsure when the spill will be officially "clean."

Gallagher expressed the serious nature of their commitment to staying on the scene as long as possible to return the lakes to their original state.

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"We understand the long-term effects and we are committed to keeping the people in white suits there however long they need to be," Gallagher said, referencing the contracted cleanup workers. "We are not walking away."

A state DEP investigation into the incident is still under way.

[http://www.nj.com/gloucester-county/index.ssf/2012/01/spill\\_had\\_a\\_12-hour\\_head\\_start.html](http://www.nj.com/gloucester-county/index.ssf/2012/01/spill_had_a_12-hour_head_start.html)

## **USA, TX, PEARSALL**

**JANUARY 22 2012.**

### **REPORT: WELDER'S TORCH IGNITED PEARSALL TANKER FIRE**

*Eric Gonzales*

The Texas Railroad Commission investigated a fire that broke out Thursday at the High Roller Well facility near Pearsall. They say the preliminary information shows sparks from a welding torch may have ignited vapors around a storage tank, causing an explosion. Three employees for High Roller LLC. were injured in the blast, but High Roller Wells say they are fine and the facility is safe. Pearsall Fire Chief Placido Aguillar says it took them about an hour and a half to put the fire out, and another hour and a half to cool it and make sure it didn't flare up again. "At one point the tank that was burning was starting to turn pretty red on the outside, meaning if we didn't get water on it pretty quick or kept cooling it, anything could have happened," Aguillar said. Pearsall residents say smoke blew up over town Thursday night. A dead bull could be seen on the fence line adjacent to the plant. The fire chief says he has not gotten any complaints of toxic air and says that officials were monitoring air quality levels just after the fire.

<http://www.kens5.com/news/Railroad-Commission-says-they-may-know-what-caused-the-blast-in-Pearsall-137795488.html>

## **CANADA, MONTREAL**

**JANUARY 25 2012.**

### **DIESEL FUEL SEEPS INTO SOIL, SEWER**

### **INSPECTOR TO PROBE SPILL AT HEART INSTITUTE AFTER 16,000-LITRE DELIVERY TO WRONG TANK**

*Peggy Curran*

How do you pump 16,000 litres of diesel fuel into the wrong tank in a hospital parking lot, where it then seeps into the soil and the city's sewer system?

An Environment Quebec inspector will visit the Montreal Heart Institute on Wednesday to try to find out how the mix-up occurred last week, how much damage was done, and what needs to be done to make sure it doesn't happen again.

As crews worked late Tuesday to clean up the spill, environment and hospital officials said there was no safety risk to patients or the public and the fire department had not signaled any risk of an explosion.

But Environment Quebec's H el ene Proteau said the incident raises troubling questions about how such a mistake could happen, and go undetected.

She said it wasn't yet clear how much fuel had escaped and what risks it could pose to soil or water. An emergency team from the ministry is working with the city and hospital to limit the environmental impact.

Hospital official Julie Chevette said the spill occurred on Friday when the hospital received a delivery of fuel to replenish its emergency generator.

However, it took four days before the Montreal fire department, alerted by anxious neighbours, pinpointed the source of a strong smell of gas in the district near the hospital and research centre on Belanger St.

"Nobody at the hospital had noticed anything until the fire department contacted us," Chevette said.

She expected the cleanup operation to be completed late Tuesday.

"What's important to stress is that there was no safety risk for patients or neighbours."

Proteau said environment officials were informed Tuesday afternoon, although the fire department began receiving complaints from neighbours on the weekend.

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/Diesel+fuel+seeps+into+soil+sewer+Montreal+Heart+Institute/6047180/story.html#ixzz1mNZE4Vb1>

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## USA, N.Y, HUDSON FALLS

JANUARY 25 2012.

### CHARGES DROPPED AGAINST MOTORIST IN HUDSON FALLS GASOLINE LEAK CASE

*Don Lehman*

Washington County prosecutors dropped charges Tuesday against a Gansevoort man who was accused of backing his vehicle into a gas pump and triggering a massive gasoline leak.

The Washington County District Attorney's Office concluded it had insufficient evidence to convict Gary A. Vadnais in the case.

Vadnais, 51, had faced a misdemeanor charge of endangering the public health or welfare and a traffic violation of leaving the scene of a property damage accident.

Hudson Falls Village Justice Michael Feeder dismissed the counts with the consent of the district attorney's office.

"The police are looking at two other suspects," Washington County District Attorney Kevin Kortright said.

Vadnais's lawyer, Tucker Stanclift, notified the court earlier this month his client had an alibi for the time of the incident.

"The DA agreed with me that the charges should be dismissed," Stanclift said. "They know it wasn't him."

The Hudson Falls Police investigation into who was driving Vadnais's car the night of Dec. 27 in the parking lot of Cumberland Farms on Main Street was continuing this week.

The distinctive Dodge Challenger sedan is seen on a store surveillance camera backing into a pump, a bump that caused a malfunction inside the pump that caused an estimated 1,200 gallons of gasoline to leak.

Police used the surveillance video to identify the car and questioned Vadnais, who gave a written statement in which he is quoted as admitting he was driving the car that night. But he said he didn't know he bumped into the pump.

"No one else was in my vehicle when I was at the Cumberland Farms that night," Hudson Falls Police Sgt. John Kibling quoted Vadnais as saying.

However, Vadnais told The Post-Star Jan. 12 he did not remember being at the store, but when officers told him his image was captured on surveillance video there, he replied he must have been there. He said he had been drinking that night.

The case was further clouded when it was determined the beer purchased from the store - by a person who was in the vehicle that bumped the pump - was purchased by someone who gave a different date of birth than Vadnais's birth date.

Stanclift would not comment when asked if Vadnais knows who was driving his car at the store.

Hudson Falls Police Chief Randy Diamond said police were continuing to investigate the case, pending a conclusion about who was behind the wheel.

"The investigation is going to continue until we determine who was driving," Diamond said.

Kortright said police are also looking into whether Vadnais should be charged with giving a false statement, in light of the fact police said he gave a sworn confession admitting he was driving the vehicle at the time of the incident.

The minor collision, which caused very little damage to the car, caused a malfunction inside the gas pump that led to gasoline pouring from it for 15 minutes or more.

The gas ran into the storm drain system, eventually making its way downhill into the village of Fort Edward.

Gasoline vapors led to numerous underground explosions that damaged streets, homes and a school, injuring one person.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation investigation of the leak was continuing Tuesday.

[http://poststar.com/news/local/charges-dropped-against-motorist-in-hudson-falls-gasoline-leak-case/article\\_df503eea-46be-11e1-9731-0019bb2963f4.html#ixzz1mNZiVXRx](http://poststar.com/news/local/charges-dropped-against-motorist-in-hudson-falls-gasoline-leak-case/article_df503eea-46be-11e1-9731-0019bb2963f4.html#ixzz1mNZiVXRx)

## CANADA, B.C, VANCOUVER, ABBOTSFORD

JANUARY 25 2012.

### ABBOTSFORD OIL SPILL AT KINDER MORGAN'S TANK FARM PUBLIC WARNED TO STAY AWAY

An estimated 110,000 litres of crude oil were captured in a containment area at Kinder Morgan's oil storage facility on Sumas Mountain early Tuesday morning and mopped up later in the day, said a company spokesperson.

The only threat to residents was that of "nuisance odours," said Kinder Morgan spokeswoman Lexa Hobenshield on Tuesday.

The oil was covered with foam to suppress the odour and was then removed.

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The leak was relatively small, less than one-quarter of one percent of Kinder Morgan's daily pipeline capacity of 300,000 barrels per day, she said.

Pipeline accidents are rare, she added, but the containment area built to contain such leaks "functioned exactly as it should," she said.

However, environmentalist Ben West of the Wilderness Committee said the spill at Kinder Morgan's Abbotsford facility on Lower Sumas Mountain Road should serve as a wake-up call about the risks associated with the oil transportation company's proposed expansion of its Trans Mountain pipeline.

"This should be a reminder to people that there is a very serious risk of oil spills when you've got oil pipelines and oil tankers," West said Tuesday.

Local resident John Vissers noted the event may make Abbotsford residents nervous about Kinder Morgan's plans to double its pipeline, especially since there was a significant spill at the tank farm in 2005 that forced some people from their homes temporarily and threatened local streams.

"Even the best technology we have, and they assured us they have it, oil spills can still happen. These spills seem to be inevitable - we have to accept that," Vissers said.

On Tuesday, Auguston Traditional Elementary students were kept inside for most of the day because of the strong-smelling fumes. Some parents came to take their kids home, said school district spokesman Dave Stephen.

The principal also decided to limit outdoor air intake to reduce any odours inside the school, he said.

"Other than that, it's a normal day at the school," said Stephen.

The Auguston subdivision and school is about a kilometre from the Sumas terminal, which has several large storage tanks.

Serena Duckett, who lives on Auguston Parkway East, said her husband noticed the smell when he left for work at 9 a.m. She is uneasy about potential health, air quality or environmental issues associated with the spill.

"[The fumes] aren't something you want to breathe into your lungs or respiratory system," she said Tuesday. "I don't know how much is getting into the ground or if it's seeping into the water or sewer or all of the above.

"I'm concerned knowing it's just behind my house," she added. "I think we should have been told [about the spill]."

Abbotsford Police Const. Ian MacDonald said his department began receiving calls of a strong oil or gas odour in the Auguston area at 4:30 a.m., and calls continued all day.

Police and fire crews went to the area at daybreak to find the source of the smell. The police eventually called Kinder Morgan and confirmed there had been an incident at the company's storage facility. MacDonald posted the information on Facebook and Twitter just after 11 a.m.

Hobenshield noted that Kinder Morgan follows an incident command system.

"As part of that, we notify agencies such as B.C. Ministry of Environment, the National Energy Board and federal Department of Environment. All of which were overseeing the incident yesterday. We did notify local key stakeholders, and worked both on our own and with the Auguston school to notify neighbors - as well as with the media," Hobenshield said Wednesday.

The incident is still under investigation, she said.

<http://www.abbotsfordtimes.com/news/Abbotsford+spill+Kinder+Morgan+tank+farm/6045411/story.html#ixzz1mNaEKeh2>

## **MALAYSIA, PENANG**

**JANUARY 28 2012.**

### **CLOSE CALL FOR ESSO FUEL TANK FARM**

*Adie Suri Zulkefli*

Quick action by firefighters averted a major disaster at the Butterworth Esso fuel tank farm after 25 wooden shops located five metres away were razed in a fire late Thursday.

The 11.15pm fire near the temporary Penang Sentral bus terminal also left more than 20 people who were renting in the wooden houses in the area homeless.

However nobody was injured in the incident but most of the victims did not manage to rescue their belongings.

The incident also left dozens of express bus passengers stranded for more than one hour after the buses leaving for the last trip could not leave the terminal as the area was cordoned.

The state Fire and Rescue Department director Azmi Tamat said they received the first call at 11.39pm and five fire engines from the Butterworth, Prai, Perda stations with 34 firefighters rushed to the scene.

804, 805, 806, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815

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They were assisted by 157 volunteer firefighters from Seberang Perai, Penang island and Lunas, Kedah and the Penang Port Sdn Bhd fire brigade.

Azmi said the wooden premises were highly flammable and the whole 100m by 100m square area was engulfed in fire within minutes.

"We had to move quickly to control the fire as we feared for the worst that it would pose grave danger to the nearby fuel tank farm.

We managed to control the fire within 25 minutes and the Esso fuel tank farm authority had activated its water sprinklers to cool down the tanks," he told Pressmen at the scene.

Among the businesses affected were express bus ticketing agents, sundry shops, telecommunication shops, foodstalls, motorcycle parking area and a motorcycle workshop.

A victim Haron Wahab, 40, who operates a telecommunication and dry fruits stall, said the fire started from one of the wooden houses behind his shop.

"The fire spread so fast, I only managed to grab my laptop and some handphone reload cards before fleeing," said Haron.

He estimated his losses at about RM70,000.

Another victim Indrawarni Mahmud, 38, who operates a bakso stall said she was asleep with her four children when she was awakened by her husband.

"I only managed to grab my bag and important documents before immediately dashing out from the upper floor," she said.

<http://www.nst.com.my/top-news/close-call-for-esso-fuel-tank-farm-1.37803>

## **USA, WASHINGTON**

**JANUARY 28 2012.**

### **CSB SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GHENT, WEST VIRGINIA PROPANE EXPLOSION LARGELY ADOPTED, EFFECTING LIFE-SAVING CHANGE**

Monday, January 30, marks the fifth anniversary of a terrible tragedy that occurred in Ghent, West Virginia – a propane explosion that took the lives of four people and injured six others at a Little General convenience store. The accident occurred as an inexperienced worker attempted to transfer propane from a tank located against an outside wall of the store.

I am pleased to report today satisfactory progress in the adoption of a number of important CSB recommendations made in our final report of September 2008, aimed at improving training requirements for propane technicians, and at improving emergency response actions by on-scene technicians and 911 operators. The recommendations have largely been adopted and will result in lives saved.

We recall with sadness that the explosion killed two emergency responders and two propane technicians and injured four clerks inside the store and two other emergency technicians standing by outside the store, which had not been evacuated. The store was leveled.

The CSB's final report found that a junior propane service technician was preparing to transfer propane, unsupervised, to a new tank from an old tank located near an outside wall of the store – a location that violated state and federal regulations. The technician removed a plug from the liquid withdrawal valve on the old tank, but the valve evidently malfunctioned, causing an uncontrollable release of propane. Propane entered the store through the restroom ventilation system. The technician had only 45 days of limited on-the-job training with his supervisor.

We issued twelve recommendations to a total of nine recipients and most have resulted in what the Board determined to be "Acceptable" action, or are being held as "Open Acceptable" because they are on the brink of completion.

It's particularly gratifying to note that our recommendation to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) resulted in the issuing of a temporary standard providing guidance for personnel who work with liquefied petroleum gas. This includes training with a defined curriculum and testing, actions which resulted in an "Open Acceptable" status determination in April 2011. I encourage the NFPA to permanently adopt the training and testing requirements for individuals who work with propane, helping reduce the loss of life and injury among propane workers and potential dangers to members of the public.

Our recommendation to the governor and legislature of West Virginia – dealing with training and qualification requirements of propane workers – was closed as "Acceptable" in August 2010 when the State Fire Marshal's Office reported that the state fire code was updated earlier that year. This kind of action serves as an example for other states.

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The Board had recommended that the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials develop a guide card for propane emergencies to assist 911 operators. The association moved promptly and within a year we determined this action to be "Acceptable."

The National Propane Gas Association adopted our recommendation, and we closed it as "Acceptable Action," in 2010, as a result of NPGA's communication with OSHA and its work with the West Virginia 911 Council to develop emergency propane guidance for 911 operators. The West Virginia 911 Council on a similar recommendation received the same satisfactory determination from the Board following the council's action.

The Board voted just last month, in December 2011, to close as "Acceptable" the response by Ferrellgas to our recommendation to establish and implement a comprehensive safety management system, as the company has improved its inspection and auditing program to detect and correct safety deficiencies. For many years, Ferrellgas owned and serviced the existing tank, which had been installed in 1994 by another company directly next to the store's exterior back wall, in violation of West Virginia and U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations.

The CSB called on the Propane Education and Research Council – which has the critical mission of determining procedures and certifying propane technicians – to revise its Certified Employee Training Program. This would include, among other things, guidance to emergency responders, and procedures for, or a prohibition on, transferring liquid propane from tank to tank.

While we were pleased with PERC's statement in 2009 that they would act on the recommendation, we had hoped for more expeditious action. However, we are retaining its status as "Open, Awaiting Response," because PERC has indicated it will submit its revised guidance documents by the end of this month.

Finally, I must note a disappointment resulting from our recommendations: The Board was compelled to vote as "Unacceptable" action not taken by the West Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services. We urged the agency to require annual hazardous materials response refresher training for all emergency medical personnel in West Virginia. To date, training occurs only once every two years. The CSB believes recurrent annual training is critical for responders who must deal with hazardous materials emergencies such as with propane.

We made a similar recommendation to the West Virginia Fire Commission. Though this has not been acted upon, we are keeping this status "Open" because we are informed that revised evaluation forms requiring annual training have been completed. We look forward to receiving the materials so we can determine this "Closed-Acceptable."

To view the CSB's Little General Store Investigation Information Page (and associated recommendations), [click here](#).

To View the CSBs Safety Video on the accident, "Half an Hour to Tragedy," [click here](#).

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

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

[www.csb.gov](http://www.csb.gov)

## **USA, AKA, NOME**

**JANUARY 28 2012.**

### **CREWS CLEAN UP AFTER SAVOONGA FUEL SPILL**

*Ben Matheson*

Crews in the St. Lawrence Island community of Savoonga are digging to reach contaminated snow after a fuel tank overflowed last Thursday and spilled thousands of gallons of diesel into a containment area. No fuel has breached the containment area.

The operator for the Native Village of Savoonga tank farm reports that a new employee opened the wrong valve during a gasoline purchase and pumped diesel fuel into a full tank, resulting in the overflow.

Wesley Ghormley is an Environmental Program Specialist for the state Department of Environmental Conservation and is monitoring the response for the state.

Ghormley says workers have collected 6,000 gallons so far.

They've removed around 100 cubic yards of uncontaminated snow, but have yet to get into the contaminated snow. Ghormley says he expects a significant amount of fuel-soaked snow, which will be stored in 270 gallon totes.

The recovered diesel will be able to be used after a filtering process. Ghormley expects another week of work

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to remove snow. He says the fumes are strong and crews are wearing full protective gear and using respirators.

DEC plans to send a representative out during spring thaw to complete a site assessment.

<http://www.alaskapublic.org/2012/01/26/crews-clean-up-after-savoonga-fuel-spill/>

## **USA, TX, PEARSALL**

**JANUARY 28 2012.**

### **AFTER WELL FIRE IN PEARSALL, QUESTIONS REMAIN**

*Terrence Henry*

What happened last week at a disposal well outside of Pearsall, Texas? An explosion rocked the site early Thursday evening — about 50 miles southwest of San Antonio in the Eagle Ford Shale — blowing the lid off a storage tank and injuring three. A fire burned for over an hour as the all-volunteer Pearsall Fire Department (and three other nearby departments) battled the flames with twelve trucks and 33 firefighters.

The explosion likely started when workers there were welding near storage tanks, a decision that has many in the industry scratching their heads. The accident is now under federal investigation.

But there's still much we don't know.

#### **Who Owns the Well?**

First, we don't know who owns the disposal well, which is used for taking wastewater from fracking and drilling and injecting it deep underground. That water contains highly flammable oil and natural gas.

While the well is operated by a company called High Roller Wells (which doesn't appear to have a website), it's unclear who actually owns it. When asked, the Railroad Commission would only say that it does not "have information on investors or owners of oil and gas facilities."

A call to the only available number online for High Roller Wells leads to the office of Terry Bailey, listed as a manager of the company. A woman who answered the phone at his office declined to answer any questions about the company or the accident. She directed all inquiries to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), then abruptly hung up.

High Roller Wells incorporated in 2010, and it received a permit for the disposal well in August of last year. The company appears to be named after another of Bailey's companies, High Roller Whitetails, a deer breeding operation. They breed whitetail bucks, some of them with horns over 300 inches, with names like Escalade, Bambi Rio and Rolex.

According to the Texas Deer Association's website, Bailey is an avid hunter who "made a niche for himself in the oil and gas industry on the manufacturing end." Online business directories list High Roller Wells and High Roller Whitetails at the same address and phone number. On Google Maps, the street appears to be mostly residential.

#### **What Happened in Pearsall**

The Railroad Commission of Texas, which oversees drilling and disposal wells in the state, conducted an initial investigation of the explosion. It released a two-paragraph statement the next day, but since then has provided little other information on the accident, referring questions to the OSHA, the federal agency now investigating the accident.

Jeff Funke, area director for the OSHA San Antonio office, spent some time talking about the fire with StateImpact Texas.

He says one issue investigators have run into is determining which ignition source at the site started the fire. "I can tell you there were many potential sources [of ignition] there," he says.

"You shouldn't be handling that water around ignition sources," says David Blackmon, Texas spokesperson for the American Natural Gas Alliance, a group that represents many major gas companies, some of which drill in the area. "It's a pretty significant error in safety, no doubt about that. Somebody's not happy about that, believe me."

#### **Wild Well Control Inc.**

A crew from Houston-based Wild Well Control fights a blowout

The most seriously injured worker was Ruben Esparza, 47, of Pearsall, who was admitted to the hospital after the accident. Esparza "was spitting out quite a bit of blood, maybe from the impact," Frio County Sheriff's Chief Deputy Joel Arellano told the San Antonio Express. "Maybe from the explosion he kind of blew against something." Esparza was the only worker admitted to the hospital.

"It could have been worse," says OSHA's Funke, echoing the assessment of the volunteer fire department that responded to the call. "Actually, I gotta say that the fact that the fire department was able to fight this with foam and water is pretty impressive for that area, for them to be able to respond at that level. Most fire departments [in the area] don't have that capability with the foam."

The accident has damaged High Roller Wells' reputation. "It's a big deal for the company," Blackmon with the American Natural Gas Alliance says, "because we all get graded by institutional investors on our safety record.

804, 805, 806, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

So we go to great leaps to avoid having any kind of incident like that. I think if you look at the safety records of the big companies that are down there, these large independents are pretty stellar.”

## **New Kids on the Block**

The OSHA area director echoes that sentiment. “We have a lot of producers and workers that are out there trying to get up and running as fast as they can,” Funke says. “And we have a lot of folks that are new to the oilfield industry.” Small, new companies like High Roller Wells are where the industry has the most issues, says Funke. “It’s not that they’re knowingly or willfully doing things wrong, but there’s so much work, they want to get up and going. That’s the real issue here.”

“It’s gonna take some catching up here,” says Jeff Funke of OSHA. “There’s an added strain on these local fire departments because of the influx of industry, there’s no doubt about that.”

Another issue is that as drilling and fuel exploration boom in the Eagle Ford, accidents are becoming more common. “Last year we had three fires related to oil and gas in [neighboring] Atascosa County,” says Funke. The Pearsall Volunteer Fire Department Chief who responded to the fire, Placido Aguilar, says they’ve responded to two other incidents in the past six months, “and they [drillers] say they’re gonna be here for a while.”

But while accidents are on the rise, local emergency services haven’t had an opportunity to catch up by increasing personnel, training and equipment. While drilling has been good for local coffers, causing tax revenues in some Eagle Ford counties to surge 900 percent in one month, it will take some time before those taxes translate into more robust emergency services. “It’s gonna take some catching up here,” says Funke of OSHA. “There’s an added strain on these local fire departments because of the influx of industry, there’s no doubt about that.”

“There’s always a one to two year time lag,” says David Blackmon of the ANGA. “This year is the first year when those local tax districts are really going to be using their revenues.”

In some cases, Funke of OSHA says, companies take their own initiative to help local emergency services. “It you’re a large company, and they come out and respond [to an incident,” he says, “the company pays back the volunteer fire department for whatever they used up.” Companies have in some instances bought new trucks for the fire departments in their area.

## **What Happens Next**

In the meantime, the investigation into the fire at the Pearsall disposal well continues. While Funke of OSHA says he doesn’t know a lot about High Roller Wells, he does say they’ve been cooperative.

He’s also certain that the company will be punished. “There will be proposed citations that will be issued to the company,” he says. They have six months from the date of the fire to issue those citations, but he doesn’t expect it will take that long. He says High Roller Wells can likely expect a citation from OSHA within a few months.

<http://stateimpact.npr.org/texas/2012/01/27/after-well-fire-in-pearsall-many-unanswered-questions-remain/>

## **USA, W.VA, MINGO CO**

**JANUARY 28 2012.**

### **WV OFFICIALS INVESTIGATING MINGO GAS SPILL**

Environmental officials are investigating a liquid natural gas spill that contaminated a creek in Mingo County Thursday evening. Petroleum Development Corp. owns the gas tank, which leaked the fuel into the Paw Paw’s Branch Creek, according to officials. About 15 barrels of the gas were leaked, but not all of it got into the creek. On Friday, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection investigators determined that the gas contaminated about a half-mile of the creek, according to Kathy Cosco, spokeswoman for the DEP. As of Friday afternoon, they have not determined whether there are any drinking water intakes in that portion of the creek. Paw Paw’s Branch Creek feeds into nearby Laurel Lake.

<http://www.wowktv.com/story/16618391/wv-officials-investigating-mingo-gas-spill>

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

**CANADA, B.C, PATRICIA BAY**

**JANUARY 28 2012.**

**DIESEL SPILL SPARKS FEARS FOR PATRICIA BAY WILDLIFE**

*Judith Lavoie*

Biologists are watching closely to see if fish or wildlife have been affected by a spill of up to 800 litres of diesel oil from a leaking generator into a fast-moving drainage ditch that runs into Patricia Bay.

The leak came from a backup generator at Epicure Selections, a spice and cookware company on West Saanich Road, but another company that installed a faulty part in the generator is financially responsible for the clean-up, Epicure spokeswoman Erin Acton said. "We had a part fail in the generator and Finning, the company that supplied the part, is responsible for assessments and mitigation," Acton said.

The generator was fired up last Sunday and the Environment Ministry was called as soon as the leak was noticed Tuesday, Acton said.

Ministry spokesman Suntanu Dalal said booms and pads were placed at several places between the spill site and Patricia Bay on Wednesday, and more remedial work was scheduled for Friday.

Provincial and federal staff will inspect the site Monday, Dalal said.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans officials inspected the outfall at the beach on Thursday morning and did not observe any visible contamination," he said.

Epicure is working with spill response co-ordinators and agencies that are trying to mop up the oil, Acton said.

"And we are working with Tseycum [First Nation]. They are our neighbours and our friends and we are very concerned about this," she said.

But Tseycum Chief Tanya Jones said band members knew nothing about the spill until late Wednesday when they were horrified to see the oil wash up on a beach they are trying to restore.

"We are just concerned about the wildlife and the beaches," Jones said.

"You can smell it in the air and see it in the stream and the water."

Tseycum biologist Stephen Barr was carrying out sand lance surveys, as part of the beach restoration, when he saw the oil. "This is a big step backwards," he said.

"It's going to do some damage somewhere."

By Thursday, the rain washed more oil into the ocean and a slick remained clearly visible in the bay, Barr said.

"At the moment, the wildlife looks OK, but it's hard to tell," he said.

North Saanich Fire Department was first on the scene and laid out booms and absorbent pads, Fire Chief Gary Wilton said.

"It got into a little drainage ditch and that takes it right out to the ocean," he said.

Recent wind and rain is helping to disperse the diesel, Wilton said.

"It shouldn't do too much damage," he said.

Meanwhile, the Environment Ministry has warned anyone who has fuel storage on-site to be especially vigilant during and after storms.

"Even small amounts of hazardous materials can have negative impacts to public health and the environment when spilled," Dalal said.

"Costs of spill response, clean-up and restoration, even for small spills, can

be extremely expensive and the person in possession or control of the material at the time of the spill is legally responsible under B.C.'s polluter-pay system."

Spills should be reported to 1-800-663-3456.

<http://www.timescolonist.com/Diesel+spill+sparks+fears+Patricia+wildlife/6064815/story.html#ixzz1mNsyeKBT>

**USA, CT, PRESTON**

**JANUARY 29 2012.**

**90,000-GALLON FUEL LEAK AT SEAT WAS UNDETECTED FOR YEARS, OFFICIALS SAY**

*Jeffrey A. Johnson*

A diesel-fuel leak that began more than two years ago at the Southeast Area Transit facility on Route 12 has released 90,000 gallons of fuel into the surrounding environment. The ongoing cleanup effort is expected to cost at least \$1.4 million.

The state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection first detected the fuel leak in August 2010 in an underground fuel line that fed above-ground fuel tanks at the SEAT facility, but no one knows exactly when it began.

And SEAT is embroiled in a lawsuit with Meriden-based United Oil Recovery Inc., the independent corporation

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# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

it hired to handle the cleanup. United is seeking about \$415,000 and claims the transit service did not pay for remediation costs after it realized the scope of the leak.

After a review of SEAT's fuel inventory records, DEEP determined that the leak started at least two years ago. SEAT General Manager Ella Bowman said Friday that one estimate states that fuel had been leaking for six to 10 years before it was detected.

"This is one of the larger underground releases that we've dealt with," Peter Zack, the assistant director of the emergency response and spill prevention division for DEEP, said Thursday. "It's a really big release."

The diesel fuel traveled several hundred feet underground - reaching depths of 18 feet - and polluted a small tributary of Poquetanuck Cove, Zack said. The cove opens into the Thames River.

Zack said the leak, which created a sheen on the cove, has not affected drinking wells and fish and other animals have not been greatly impacted. DEEP took over the cleanup effort last July.

Initial signs

In the summer of 2010, SEAT, which provides transit services to nine towns in the region, hired United to handle the cleanup, according to court documents. The company worked through July 2011 before filing a lawsuit against SEAT in September.

The suit claims that SEAT refused to pay for cleanup despite receiving periodic invoices that showed mounting costs. United is seeking \$414,946, plus interest and legal fees, according to court documents. The case is ongoing in Meriden Superior Court.

Bowman said Friday that SEAT initially paid approximately \$400,000 for the cleanup. She declined to comment on the ongoing lawsuit but said the underground fuel release was undetectable.

"It was a sub-surface release," she said. "There was no evidence of it."

However, Jaroslaw "Jerry" Pizunski, president of the SEAT drivers' union, said Wednesday that drivers had complained to Bowman for months about the smell of diesel fuel behind the SEAT facility.

DEEP first arrived on the scene after Preston road foreman Bob Boyd reported the smell of diesel fuel as he worked on the Norwich Hospital property across the street from the SEAT facility.

Aaron Green, a supervising and environmental analyst for DEEP, said it is unknown how long it will take to clean up the affected area, although Zack said it could be years. Green characterized the environmental harm as "moderate" because there are no drinking-water wells in the area.

Zack said DEEP's total costs will reach \$1 million. The agency has plans for the installation of sheet piling to prevent fuel from reaching the Thames River.

DEEP also recently installed 12 wells as part of a recovery phase that Zack said is expected to cost approximately \$500,000. The recovery wells will pump out the ground water, and once the water table drops, the fuel will flow into the wells, Zack said.

He said normally DEEP completes the remediation process and the agency then seeks to recover costs from the responsible party. A state Department of Transportation spokesman said Friday that the DOT is involved in ongoing discussions with SEAT regarding responsibility for the leak.

Paul Altman, the chairman of SEAT's board of directors, declined comment earlier this week on the fuel leak and the ongoing lawsuit.

'A red flag'

SEAT, which operates out of a state DOT building, has faced major financial difficulties recently. Figures presented at a board of directors meeting earlier this week revealed SEAT's expenses in the most recent fiscal year totaled more than \$6 million while its revenue was about \$5.5 million.

The bus company receives 70 percent of its funding - about \$3.8 million - from the state, and 8 percent - about \$450,000 - from the nine towns it serves. SEAT laid off five drivers in February 2011 and has cut routes as it has reduced its group drivers to 36.

Pizunski, the president of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1209, and two other drivers said Bowman has resisted the union's efforts to see an audit of the financial records of the transit company. One of their concerns is mounting legal costs from the leak, Pizunski said Wednesday.

"Guess who's paying for those lawyers? The public," Pizunski said of the lawsuit.

The cost of the lost fuel has not been calculated. Bowman said Friday she was uncertain of the cost because the leak took place over a such long period of time.

Kevin Nursick, a spokesman for the DOT, said Friday the agency's primary objective is to ensure that a leak does not happen again and that environmental remediation in the area is completed.

"From our perspective, the loss of potentially 90,000 gallons of fuel and having that go undetected over a

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

course of time is a red flag for us," Nursick said. "... That is a discussion we have had and will continue to have with SEAT in the future."

## **Changes at SEAT**

The Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments, a planning agency comprised of 20 top officials from towns in the region, recently accepted a legislative proposal that would give the COG more authority over SEAT.

The proposed legislation would allow the COG to add three members to the SEAT board of directors. It also would grant COG the authority to approve the appointment of the SEAT general manager and to ratify any contract in excess of \$100,000. The proposal also calls for a annual audit.

Several members of the SEAT board criticized the proposal at a meeting Wednesday. Vice chairman Angelo Yeitz speculated at the meeting that it was the fuel spill that led COG to seek more control over the transit district.

The legislation must go before the General Assembly for approval.

SEAT's member towns are East Lyme, Griswold, Groton, Ledyard, Montville, New London, Norwich, Stonington and Waterford.

SEAT also has recently held several public hearings on a proposal that calls for 25-cent fare increases on all fixed bus routes. Those increases are expected to be in effect at some point in March.

In the most recent fiscal year, 19 percent of SEAT's revenue came from passenger fares. That accounted for about \$1 million.

<http://www.theday.com/article/20120128/NWS01/301289970/1018>

## **CHINA, FUJIAN PROVINCE**

**JANUARY 30, 2012**

### **THREE KILLED REPAIRING BLOCKED CHEMICAL TANK IN CHINA**

Three workers were killed by poisonous gas as they were repairing a clogged chemical tank in a copper smelting plant in the coastal Fujian Province, China.

The accident occurred when a chemical tank in the plant became clogged. One worker entered the tank to remove the blockage but suddenly passed out. His three co-workers tried to rescue him but also lost consciousness. The four were rushed to a hospital immediately but three of them were pronounced dead. One was out of danger after emergency treatment.

The three victims were employees of the Zijin Copper Corporation, a subsidiary of the publicly listed Zijin Mining Group Co. Zijin Copper Corporation has suspended production in the plant while an investigation is under way.

<http://www.fs-world.com/Show.asp?ID=12404&Form=1>

## **USA, TN, NASHVILLE**

**FEBRUARY 4 2012.**

### **DOWNED TREE CAUSES LARGE FUEL SPILL NEAR OLD HICKORY LAKE**

The storms that marched through Middle Tennessee Wednesday night weren't particularly strong in Wilson County, but their aftermath is proving costly as crews rush to clean up a large fuel spill caused by a downed tree near Old Hickory Lake, emergency officials said.

Emergency workers are estimating that the cleanup could take anywhere from two or three days.

Crews worked all day Thursday and are expecting to work all day today at the site, which is near the Cedar Creek Yacht Club in Mt. Juliet.

"We're not sure exactly what time the tree went down," said Joey Cooper, a battalion chief at Wilson Emergency Management Agency.

"But it fell on four pipelines. One carried diesel fuel, two carried gasoline and one was electrical. All of these lines were about an inch and a half thick and ran from the tank storage area at the yacht club down to the water, where they fed the service tanks for boats."

The tree damaged all four pipelines, but only caused two of them to leak.

"We're estimating that under 50 gallons leaked from the gasoline pipeline and anywhere from 400-600 gallons leaked from the diesel pipeline," Cooper said.

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Emergency officials were notified of the situation at about 10 a.m. this morning, when yacht club workers arrived to do their morning checks.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20120202/NEWS01/120202032/Downed-tree-causes-large-fuel-spill-near-Old-Hickory-Lake->

## **USA, CO, WALSH**

**JANUARY 9 2012.**

### **RESIDENTS RETURN HOME IN WALSH AFTER TANK RUPTURE**

Emergency HAZMAT crews will have to test the soil for contamination in a small town in southeastern Colorado.

Crews are returning Thursday to ensure no chemicals got into the groundwater after an ammonia spill Wednesday morning in Walsh. The spill forced dozens of residents to be evacuated for several hours.

Riley Frazee, a representative for the Division of Emergency Management, says the chemical involved is considered an extremely hazardous substance by the EPA. It is called anhydrous ammonia, and is used as a fertilizer. It can cause death if inhaled in large quantities, but luckily everyone in the area evacuated immediately. There were no injuries.

Frazee says the tank was being pulled behind a pickup truck for delivery to a farm south of Walsh. The front axle of the trailer broke, and the tank slammed into the pavement. Two valves on the front of the tank broke, allowing the chemical to leak out and form a hazardous cloud.

One neighbor saw the accident happen.

"I looked back and saw the anhydrous ammonia tank fall...saw the smoke go up, so I called 911 for help," Margaret Collins told 11 News.

Crews were able to get the ammonia tank secured and the valves plugged. The tank was moved to a safe location.

Reports have indicated the tank had an estimated capacity of between 500 and 1,000 gallons.

About 700 people live in Walsh.

The leak was centered near where South Illinois Street merges with County Road 44.

[http://www.kktv.com/news/headlines/10\\_Homes\\_Evacuated\\_in\\_Walsh\\_after\\_tank\\_rupture\\_138937329.html](http://www.kktv.com/news/headlines/10_Homes_Evacuated_in_Walsh_after_tank_rupture_138937329.html)

## **USA, CT, GREENWICH**

**FEBRUARY 9 2012.**

### **HUNDREDS OF GALLONS OF DIESEL FUEL SPILL INTO GREENWICH POND**

A tank at a Verizon facility on King Street leaked nearly a thousand gallons of diesel fuel into a nearby pond that straddles the Connecticut/New York border, prompting a cleanup response from both states, a Connecticut official said Friday.

Dennis Schain, spokesman for the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, said the tank feeds a backup generator at the facility, which is located at 1090 King St. in Rye Brook, N.Y., just across the state line from Greenwich.

Between 500 and 900 gallons of diesel fuel leaked from the tank, the contaminant lapping up near the shore on the Greenwich side of the pond, Schain said. The leak was stopped sometime in the afternoon.

The department first received a report of the spill Thursday afternoon after residents began to see a sheen on the pond, and DEEP has since been monitoring cleanup efforts by AARCO Environmental Services Corp., a Lindenhurst, N.Y.-based environmental contracting firm hired by Verizon, Schain said.

Located north of the Merritt Parkway across the street from Shemin Nurseries in Greenwich, the pond leads into a series of brooks and streams on the Connecticut side of the state line.

"The outflow is on the Connecticut side of the border," Schain said. "There was an oil sheen on the surface of some of the streams."

A resident of nearby Willow Run Road, who wished not to be identified, said the smell of fuel was strong near the pond and stream.

When asked about the size of the spill, Schain said "it's significant," but added that there will be no adverse health consequences for residents.

Officials have not yet determined how long the tank was leaking for, said Schain, who couldn't elaborate on how far downstream the fuel traveled.

A phone message seeking comment was left for a Verizon representative.

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Yellow and white booms from AARCO blocked off the northeast corner of the pond on Friday afternoon. Additionally, AARCO crews placed absorbing booms in the streams and cleaned the fuel from spots where it contacted stream banks, Schain said.

Work on the Connecticut side of the pond was completed by late Friday afternoon, he said. The New York Department of Environmental Conservation was continuing to monitor cleanup efforts on the New York side, he said.

"You hate to see any contaminant get into the environment, but they are going to recapture most of it," he said. "The rest will be washed downstream and diluted fairly quickly."

Most of the pond lies in Rye Brook, N.Y., but the environmental firm's booms were lined up in the small section in Greenwich.

An AARCO representative would not comment other than to confirm that company employees were working at the scene and had been contracted by Verizon.

When reached by phone Friday afternoon, a representative from the nursery declined to comment.

<http://www.greenwichtime.com/police-reports/article/Hundreds-of-gallons-of-diesel-fuel-spill-into-2997006.php#ixzz1mwOf5iKX>

## USA, CA, LOS ANGELES

**FEBRUARY 10 2012.**

### **CAL/OSHA FINES 3 BUSINESSES MORE THAN \$500K FOR SYLMAR BLAST**

*Dana Bartholomew*

Three businesses behind the alternative fuel blast that rocked Sylmar and dismembered two men last summer have been fined more than \$500,000 by the state.

Cal/OSHA fined three companies doing business at 12349 Gladstone Ave., where an Aug. 9 hydrogen fuel explosion blew the roof off the rented building, the state worker safety agency reported Thursday.

Both Timothy B. Larson, then a 42-year-old Los Angeles firefighter on medical leave while working at his family firm, and 66-year-old consultant William Stehl, lost limbs.

The state fined Realm Catalyst Inc., Rainbow of Hope Foundation, and Strategic Sciences Inc. a combined \$540,890 - a hefty penalty levied because it was the second violent explosion the companies had created while experimenting with an alternative energy scheme. A 2010 blast in Simi Valley had killed one of the owners' sons.

"There were 'willful serious' citations issued for failure to follow safety protocols recognized by Rainbow of Hope and Strategic Sciences when dealing with this type of gas," said Erika Monterroza, a spokeswoman for the state Division of Occupational Safety and Health, otherwise known as Cal/OSHA.

"The companies had a similar incident in the past, and ignored it."

The thunderous detonation occurred at 4:20 p.m. Aug. 9, nearly leveling the 7,400- square-foot single-story building and blowing out doors and windows in nearby offices and cars.

Scores of workers were evacuated from the industrial park north of the 210 Freeway.

A month later, federal environmental officials shut down the freeway as they blew up at least one canister of the explosive hydrogen gas.

State industrial safety regulators blamed the explosion on three intertwined companies linked to a suspected New York con artist and a San Fernando Valley attorney whose company's alternative energy experiments killed one son and seriously injured another.

Realm Catalyst was owned by Timothy A. Larson, a lawyer based in Mission Hills, and father of Timothy B. Larson who lost an arm and a leg in the explosion last summer.

Cal/OSHA cited the company for killing his younger son, 28-year-old Tyson Larson, in a similar blast on June 17, 2010, at its now-shuttered Simi Valley plant.

The newlywed UCLA graduate had just won a patent with William A. Stehl for a way to create energy from water by using electricity.

Authorities said the Simi Valley explosion that killed him was caused by a pressure tank used to heat water in an attempt to generate hydrogen. Stehl was present during that explosion as well.

Realm Catalyst was cited for three violations, with fines nearing \$5,700. The company was dissolved in November 2011, according to the California secretary of state.

Timothy A. Larson of Simi Valley did not return a request for comment.

The explosion that occurred a year later in Sylmar was caused by a dangerous hydrogen extracting process now being pursued at great risk by some alternative fuel companies.

Known as Brown's gas - and dubbed "boom gas" by its German inventors - it electrolyzes water into oxygen

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

and hydrogen and can combine the two with fatal results.

A Cal/OSHA report said that the Aug. 9 blast occurred as Timothy B. Larson and Stehl were preparing equipment for an upcoming sales demonstration for Strategic Sciences. They allegedly had hoped to promote the benefits and properties of the so-called TyLar gas experimental fuel, which they made.

A TyLar gas cylinder blew up while in the process of "being handled in the non-intrinsically safe work area, resulting in severe burns and serious multiple amputations to the two employees," the report said.

The agency concluded that flammable levels of the gas, handled in non-explosion-proof environments, contributed directly to the blast.

It concluded that both oxygen and hydrogen were incompatibly stored in the same tanks. Two of the companies received \$67,500 fines for handling flammable gas near electrical equipment in a hazardous location.

Cal/OSHA issued citations to the companies Monday and Tuesday. They have 15 days to pay or appeal the proposed penalties.

Rainbow of Hope is registered to the Oxnard home of Stehl, who was present during the Simi Valley blast and who had pleaded not guilty to federal charges in New York of having fleeced more than 300 people out of \$7 million who had invested in an alternative energy scheme.

Stehl, who lost an arm in the explosion, could not be reached.

Strategic Sciences listed a Wilshire Boulevard Los Angeles address. Its CEO was Dale Zuehls, who, according to Cal/OSHA, was also the president of Realm Catalyst.

Zuehls, a Los Angeles certified public accountant, said his only work for the companies was to register and dissolve them. He said Strategic Sciences, which dissolved in California in 2008, was now a registered company in Nevada.

The Cal/OSHA spokeswoman said the agency's Bureau of Investigation may be conducting a criminal investigation, with any evidence turned over to the Los Angeles district attorney.

Monterroza said the nearly \$6,000 fine following the death of the younger Larson was ramped up to more than \$500,000 "because the hazard existed, and they ignored the hazard.

"They did not follow the protocols they had already put in place that an officer (of both companies) said needed to be followed."

[http://www.dailynews.com/news/ci\\_19929302](http://www.dailynews.com/news/ci_19929302)

## **USA, CT, MONROE**

**FEBRUARY 12 2012.**

### **STOLEN COPPER PIPING LEADS TO OIL LEAK ON BAGBURN HILL ROAD FIRE DEPARTMENT CREWS HAVE BEEN ON THE SCENE SINCE 3:30 P.M.**

*Bill Bittar*

Fire Marshal Bill Davin said a man living at 317 Old Zoar Road had called firefighters at around 3:30 p.m. when he smelled oil.

Firefighters determined that oil had seeped into a pond in the man's yard and were able to trace it back to a vacant house for sale at 90 Bagburn Hill Road.

When someone stole copper pipes to the approximately 275 gallon oil tank, Davin said oil escaped through the basement's dirt floor, and got into a drain pipe and before being carried into a storm drain.

"We still have not determined how much product had leaked," Davin said Thursday.

A police officer directed traffic at about 5:30 p.m. as a State Department of Energy & Environmental Protection crew and a clean up company cleaned the pond and the basement floor. Monroe Fire Department Spokesman Kevin Catalano expected the DEEP to be on the scene into Friday morning.

A Stevenson fire truck was parked on Bagburn Hill Road as firefighters, police officers and DEEP officials nearby assessed the extent of the oil leak.

Drivers may have noticed crews of firefighters at the intersection of Bagburn Hill and Old Zoar roads this afternoon. Kevin Catalano, the Monroe Volunteer Fire Department spokesman, said oil from a vacant house leaked into a pond near a home on Old Zoar.

Catalano said someone stole copper piping attached to a 275 gallon oil tank in the basement.

"The amount that spilled is difficult to quantify," he said. "It leaked into the storm drain and a pond. We have had crews there since about 3:30. The DEP is enroute to assess the situation."

<http://monroe.patch.com/articles/firefighters-respond-to-oil-leak-on-bagburn-hill-road>

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

**USA, MT, BILLINGS**

**FEBRUARY 12 2012.**

## **EPA MOVES TO PREVENT FUEL SPILLS ON FARMS**

*Tom Lutey*

At Nedens farms, the price of fuel is no small matter. The family business north of Hardin burns through more than 60,000 gallons of diesel a year.

So, when the opportunity arises to save a few pennies a gallon, the Nedens pounce, usually by buying an entire fuel truck's worth of diesel at a time.

"Obviously, if you buy a whole tanker load of fuel, it's going to be substantially lower," Brett Nedens said of the price. "I think I can save about 20 cents a gallon. Obviously if you can load it at the refinery, it costs a lot less."

The savings add up for Nedens and other farmers, who save about \$20,000 a year buying bulk. But now they'll have to weigh that savings against the costs of complying with federal regulations.

The Environmental Protection Agency is requiring farmers with 10,000 gallons of fuel storage or more to come up with engineer-certified fuel spill containment facilities. Smaller farms with storage below the 10,000 mark but more than 1,320 gallons have to complete a self-designed plan for containing fuel spills.

Farm fuel spills have been only softly regulated by the EPA, but the agency is bringing more focus on spills out of concern for water quality and levying fines of more than a thousand dollars for major noncompliance.

Agriculture groups are urging members to take compliance seriously, partly because many farms and ranchers were caught off guard last November when a compliance deadline arrived. The groups lobbied Congress and managed to get the deadline pushed back to May for EPA's Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasures program. Another reset isn't likely.

"Farmers and ranchers need to be diligent in ensuring they have properly developed a spill plan that complies with the regulations specified into law," said John Youngberg of Montana Farm Bureau Federation.

Last fall farmers were scrambling to find engineers capable of designing farm-scale spill containment areas and weren't having much luck. Since then, the state's larger cooperatives that also deliver bulk fuel have been presenting classes on spill containment and bringing in from other states engineers who specialize in farm fuel spill control.

The Natural Resources and Conservation Service also has begun offering Montana farmers help both with the costs of designing the plan and also construction costs, said Tim Ouellette of NRCS in Bozeman. NRCS is getting involved because it would like plans that not only address risks to rivers and streams, but also groundwater. The agency will post a list of program certified engineers on its website: [www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov). The application deadline for NRCS support is March 16.

Ouellette said there's been some confusion about the SPCC compliance deadline. The deadline was only for farmers who got into the business after 2002. Everyone else should already be in compliance. Also, the rules apply to storage capacity, meaning a farmer with 10,000 or more gallons of storage for petroleum products has to comply regardless of how many gallons of fuel are actually stored.

Though Montana producers seem to be just getting going on spill containment, their Dakota neighbors have been dealing with spill rules for awhile. The states were part of a pilot program that began several years ago. Because of that, there are containment systems on the market that have already passed muster with the EPA.

Tim Ketcham of True North, a North Dakota-based steel company with a Billings shop, has several containment products. Ketcham markets double-lined tanks, and rubber-lined containment areas with steel walls to trap spills from conventional tanks. The costs start at roughly \$3,000 and increase to \$10,000 or more.

The lined containment areas are more affordable, Ketcham said. He's had farmers inquire about buying just the liner and constructing their own retaining walls out of grain bin panels. That's risky because grain bin panels are not meant to be exposed to the ground, he said. True North recommends walls made from the galvanized steel used for culverts.

[http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/montana/epa-moves-to-prevent-fuel-spills-on-farms/article\\_0325148a-cd86-57b8-9bff-c41fec1102bc.html#ixzz1n7tPMN8x](http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/montana/epa-moves-to-prevent-fuel-spills-on-farms/article_0325148a-cd86-57b8-9bff-c41fec1102bc.html#ixzz1n7tPMN8x)

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

**USA, CA, SAN FRANCISCO**

**FEBRUARY 12 2012.**

## **CAL-OSHA SAYS ALTERNATIVE FUEL BUSINESSES FAILED TO PROTECT WORKERS BEFORE BLAST**

*Adam Foxman*

After two explosions at a Simi Valley alternative energy business, including one that killed the owner's son, the company failed to correct hazards or protect employees from known dangers, according to the state Division of Occupational Safety and Health.

These violations were among findings that led the state agency this week to fine three related alternative energy businesses nearly \$541,000 in connection with an Aug. 9, 2011, explosion that ripped much of the roof off a Sylmar building.

It was the third explosion associated with the companies in three years and it injured two people — the brother of the man killed in Simi Valley and an Oxnard man accused of defrauding investors with claims about an alternative fuel process. A third person suffered minor injuries.

Cal-OSHA on Tuesday and Wednesday issued a total of 27 citations to Rainbow of Hope, Realm Catalyst Inc. and Strategic Sciences Inc. in connection with the Aug. 9 blast at 12349 Gladstone Ave. in Sylmar. The citations included six "willful serious" violations, meaning the employer knew about the hazards and made no reasonable attempt to eliminate them, Cal-OSHA reported.

"There are laws protecting workers in the workplace for a reason, and what this investigation shows is that these employers didn't live up to those responsibilities," said Erika Monterroza, a spokeswoman for Cal-OSHA.

Cal-OSHA investigators are currently conducting a criminal investigation in the case, Monterroza said. She said the results would be turned over to prosecutors.

The citation reports from Cal-OSHA included findings that employers failed to correct hazardous conditions identified in prior explosions and did not ensure ignition sources were eliminated from the work area despite gas manufacturing and storage that "could reasonably be expected to give rise to explosive environments." The employers also failed to develop a written communication plan for the use of flammable gasses, failed to protect employees from explosion hazards, and stored oxygen and hydrogen together despite prior knowledge that the pressurized gasses were "incompatible," Cal-OSHA says.

Timothy B. Larson, 42, of Realm Catalyst and William Stehl, 66, of Rainbow of Hope lost limbs and suffered serious burns after a pressurized vessel containing gas including hydrogen and oxygen exploded Aug. 9, Cal-OSHA reported.

Larson and Stehl were preparing for a Strategic Sciences sales demonstration involving their "Tylar gas experimental fuel" when a cylinder of the flammable gas exploded in an unsafe work area, the agency reported.

The blast was the third involving businesses owned by Timothy A. Larson, a lawyer with an office in Mission Hills. The attorney is the father of Timothy B. Larson, a Los Angeles city firefighter on long-term medical leave after he was hurt in the Sylmar blast; and Tyson Larson, 28, who was killed in June 2010 in one of the Simi Valley explosions.

Timothy A. Larson could not be reached Friday for comment.

All three explosions reportedly involved hydrogen. Witnesses told investigators that Realm Catalyst in Simi Valley was trying to make alternative fuel from water and Tyson Larson was operating equipment when the fatal explosion occurred.

Tyson Larson and Stehl applied in 2009 to patent a process for making energy from water. The science in the application has drawn scepticism, but Cal-OSHA's investigation did not address the validity of the science.

Stehl was accused of making false claims about the commercial viability of the alternative energy process. He has pleaded not guilty to federal charges of conspiracy to commit fraud and tax evasion.

Stehl's federal trial was postponed due to the injuries he suffered Aug. 9, court records show.

<http://www.vcstar.com/news/2012/feb/10/calosha-alternative-fuel-businesses-failed-to/>

**USA, OH, AMHERST**

**FEBRUARY 13 2012.**

## **20 GALLONS OF GASOLINE LEAK INTO STORM SEWER**

*Jason Henry*

Roughly 20 gallons of gasoline poured into a storm sewer last night and emptied into Beaver Creek after a spill from a Sunoco gas station on the corner of SR 58 and Cooper Foster Park Road. "It is unknown exactly how the spill occurred, but a trucking company was filling the station's underground storage tank at the time," said Heidi Griesmer, an Ohio EPA spokeswoman. It is unclear if Sunoco or the trucking company is to blame.

804, 805, 806, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

They are doing a tank test to see if there were any leaks in the underground storage tank to figure out which is the responsible party she said.

A police officer noticed the spill just after 12 a.m. and contacted the Lorain County Emergency Management Agency which contacted the Ohio EPA, Griesmer said. An official from the Ohio EPA arrived at about 5 a.m. and the clean up operation completed at approximately 11 a.m., Griesmer said.

The spill is contained, she said. Chemtron Corporation of Avon Lake vacuumed the fuel from the creek. Crews also placed containment booms in the creek as a precaution.

"We will be continuing to go out and monitor the creek for the next several days," Griesmer said. "We don't expect much of an impact for the creek."

The Amherst Fire Department, Lorain Fire Department and Lorain County and the Lorain County EMA assisted with the operation.

<http://morningjournal.com/articles/2012/02/13/news/mj5732563.txt>

## **AUSTRALIA, NEW SOUTH WALES, SYDNEY**

**FEBRUARY 15 2012.**

### **PETROLEUM LEAK AT KURNELL REFINERY**

*Emma Partridge*

Emergency services and staff have fixed a minor leak at the Caltex oil refinery at Kurnell this afternoon.

An alarm was sounded this afternoon at the refinery after reports of a liquid leak.

Miranda police said the leak never posed any threat to nearby residents or businesses.

The leak was fixed about 3pm.

Caltex spokesman Sam Collyer said it was not a gas leak and that all employees would remain on site as part of a standard safety procedure.

A person onsite, told the Leader that staff were not able to leave the site until the leak was fixed.

"All personnel have been moved away from the area to allow emergency service and Caltex personnel to respond to the leak," Mr Collyer said.

<http://www.theleader.com.au/news/local/news/general/petroleum-leak-at-kurnell-refinery/2456856.aspx>

## **USA, MN, APPLE VALLEY**

**FEBRUARY 15 2012.**

### **UP TO 10,000 GALLONS OF UNLEADED GASOLINE LEAKS FROM FUEL TANK**

Fire officials are on the scene of a large gas leak in Apple Valley, according to Fire Chief Nealon Thompson.

Crews were called to the scene near the area of Galaxie Avenue and 150th Street in Apple Valley on a report of a smell of gas at about 4:55 p.m. When they arrived, there was a gas leak in an 80,000 gallon storage unit at the Magellan site on the 6400 block of 150th Street.

Thompson said so far between 5,000 and 10,000 gallons of fuel has leaked out of the unit. The fuel was contained into a dyke around the storage tank. Thompson said there is no cause for concern at this time and the public is not in any danger. The staff at Magellan is working to retrieve all of the leaked fuel.

The cause of the leak is under investigation at this time, but the leak has been stopped and contained to the facility, authorities said. Officials are reporting that gas can be smelled from up to a half mile away from the scene, but there is no danger to the public.

Apple Valley's hazardous material team is on the scene as a precaution. Fire officials will remain on the scene as a precautionary measure. Thompson said the clean-up effort should take two to three more hours.

<http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2012/02/14/fuel-container-leaking-in-apple-valley-no-injuries/>

## **SCOTLAND, ABERDEENSHIRE**

**FEBRUARY 15 2012.**

### **ILLICIT FUEL PLANTS DISMANTLED IN ABERDEENSHIRE**

Two illicit bio-diesel production plants have been dismantled by HM Revenue & Customs following an operation in Peterhead.

HMRC, assisted by the Grampian Police, raided two storage facilities near Peterhead town centre. They uncovered the plants last Thursday, February 9.

During the searches officers seized nearly 4,000 litres of illicit fuel, 750 litres of methanol, 200 litres of kerosene, pumps, equipment and business records.

804, 805, 806, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Making biodiesel is a potentially hazardous process that should only be carried out in controlled conditions by people with the proper training and experience. At the very least a poorly made product could seriously damage a vehicle engine.

Graeme Anderson, Assistant Director, HMRC Specialist Investigations, said: "Illegal bio-diesel sites and those involved are creating a cheap and unregulated supply that honest producers cannot compete with.

"They rob taxpayers of millions each year in unpaid duty and VAT, funds that could be used for essential services in our communities.

"Before buying cheap fuel motorists need to consider the real costs – although you may think you are getting a bargain, you really have no idea what you are paying for.

"Buying illicit fuel not only funds crime, but it also supports and encourages these dangerous activities within our communities."

Two men were questioned by HMRC and investigations are continuing.

"Anyone with information about this kind of activity or fuel misuse in their area should contact our free telephone hotline 0800 59 5000."

<http://www.deadlinenews.co.uk/2012/02/13/illicit-fuel-plants-dismantled-in-aberdeenshire/>

## **CANADA, OTTAWA**

**FEBRUARY 15 2012.**

### **FIREFIGHTERS WARD OFF EXPLOSIONS IN SHED FIRE**

Fire crews were able to keep a big fire from getting much worse west of Ottawa on Saturday.

A 60 foot by 80 foot shop that was used to make biodiesel caught fire after 6 p.m. Saturday in Kinburn, about 45 minutes west of downtown Ottawa.

Firefighters had to deal with the chemicals inside the building as well as 20,000 litres of fuel in tanks beside the metal shed.

"We're just trying to protect any other possible compressed gasses . . . or propanes that might be inside," said Ottawa fire district chief Ray Balcom on Saturday night. "We're trying to make sure none of them explode."

That building ended up collapsing on itself but crews were able to save other buildings on the property, including the home 200 feet away.

Crews from Mississippi Mills and Arnprior were called to help bring more water to the scene.

"In weather conditions like this, in order to provide a continuous supply of water we have to truck it in," Balcom said. "The crews have done a very good job of that."

A trailer and a vehicle were destroyed by fire, which caused a total of \$375,000 damage.

Environmental crews will handle the cleanup because of the materials in the building.

The cause is under investigation.

<http://ottawa.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20120212/OTT-kinburn-shed-fire-biodiesel-120212/20120212/?hub=OttawaHome>

## **USA, WA, FERNDALE**

**FEBRUARY 19 2012.**

### **CREWS DOUSE FIRE AT WASHINGTON'S LARGEST OIL REFINERY**

Fire crews doused a dramatic blaze that broke out Friday at Washington's largest oil refinery, sending up towering flames and creating a thick plume of black smoke visible for miles.

Fire crews doused a dramatic blaze that broke out Friday at Washington's largest oil refinery, BP Cherry Point.

Workers at the BP Cherry Point refinery near Blaine in northwest Washington's Whatcom County were evacuated shortly after the fire started at about 2:30 p.m. in a tower on the refinery's south side. The fire was out by 4 p.m., BP spokesman Scott Dean said.

The Bellingham Herald reported that about 100 evacuated workers gathered in a parking lot to watch the flames.

All employees and contractors who were at the site were safe and accounted for, Dean said, although he could not provide a precise figure Friday night. One contractor complained of knee pain and went to a local hospital for observation, the spokesman said.

Dean couldn't say what the tower is normally used for or what it contained.

Television footage showed fire crews sending several streams of water onto the fire and also using retardant foam to douse the tower.

## Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

There was no immediate word on the cause of the fire or the extent of damage.

The refinery continues to produce products for customers, Dean said, adding it was "too soon to speculate on future supply impacts."

The one-square-mile refinery employs more than 800 people and can process as much as 230,000 barrels of crude oil a day from Alaska. From that amount, the refinery has the ability to produce 2.5 million gallons of jet fuel, 3.5 million gallons of gasoline, 2.2 million gallons of diesel, 360,000 gallons of butane and 140,000 gallons of propane.

According to the BP website, the refinery is the largest supplier of fuel for the Seattle, Portland, and Vancouver, British Columbia, airports. It also provides 20 percent of Washington state's gasoline, the website said.

The refinery was fined more than \$69,000 in 2010 for 13 serious safety violations, state Department of Labor and Industries spokesman Hector Castro said. He added that all five of the state's refineries have been fined for safety regulations.

Inspectors were heading to Cherry Point to investigate Friday's fire.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was sending an air-monitoring crew to make sure there was no danger to those nearby, EPA spokesman Mike MacIntyre said.

Mike Abendhoff, another BP spokesman, said the refinery's own air-monitoring crew had already begun tests and he had no reports of danger from fumes.

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/story/2012-02-18/oil-refinery-fire/53138662/1>