

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, OH, COSHOCTON

JULY 16 2012.

COSHOCTON MAN BURNED WHEN WORKING WITH GASOLINE

Kathie Dickerson

Although life returned to normal for most Coshocton County residents after electric was restored to all customers this past week, it will take several weeks for things to get back to normal for the Laugesens, of Warsaw -- if they ever do.

Kristopher Laugesen, 56, suffered second- and third-degree burns on his legs July 1 after a gas can blew up in his hands. He was trying to fuel a generator and because it was a metal gas can, he thinks somehow a spark was generated when it hit against something. The can exploded and sprayed gasoline onto his legs, which caught fire. He's spent the past two weeks at Akron Children's Hospital Burn Institute. Doctors performed eight skin grafts using tissue from his upper thigh area.

His wife, Mary, said the morning of the incident he dropped and rolled, but it didn't help. He then dove into a hot tub they'd just filled, and as a result skinned up his head. But his other injuries were far more serious.

"His legs were horrendous," she said.

She drove him to Coshocton Hospital herself, not wanting to wait for the ambulance to get there.

"I used to be an EMT," she said. "I knew we had to hurry, and I think we made it there in 12 minutes."

Kris, who's been too ill to speak this week, told Mary he's embarrassed by the incident, that he should have known better.

"I tell him, accidents happen," she said.

She said it will be a while before he can get back to his carpentry trade.

"I don't know why something like this had to happen to us," she said. "We just paid off our property, have struggled and not taken vacations."

Her concern about their future has led to the decision that she might take up a crusade after Kris recovers.

"If you don't have children and you aren't indigent, there's no help out there," she said.

Although Kris has medical insurance, there still is the expense of making the 2.5-hour drive to Akron. Mary took some time off work to be with him. They'll need to continue to make trips to Akron for checkups and rehabilitation.

"I think I want to become a lobbyist to see if there can't be something to benefit the thousands of others out there like us," she said.

She's contacted her state and federal legislators, and while everyone has been really nice, they've not found any assistance for the Laugesens.

Mary did get one wish, however. Kris was dismissed from the hospital this week and the couple celebrated their 28th wedding anniversary Friday.

"We've never spent one anniversary apart," she said. "This has been an eye opener as to how quickly things can change."

Luckily the couple has some backup as far as taking care of their 40-acre farm near Warsaw. Their son, Brandon, and his wife, Jennifer Laugesen, are home from an overseas tour in the military, and son Blake Laugesen is also a big help, Mary said.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

"And we've received lots of prayers on Facebook," she said. "Continue to put us in your prayers until Kris recovers."

<http://www.coshocotribune.com/article/20120715/NEWS01/207150302/Coshocot-man-burned-when-working-gasoline?odyssey=mod%7Cnewswell%7Ctext%7C%7Cs>

USA, N.D, WILLISTON

JULY 16 2012.

LIGHTNING STRIKE IGNITES TANK IN OIL PATCH

Officials say lightning struck a saltwater tank near Williston causing the contents and the tank to burn. The Williston Rural Fire Department responded to the blaze last week. Fire Chief Dave Benth tells the Dickinson Press that the fiberglass tank held a mixture of gas and saltwater. When the lightning struck the tank, the gas caught on fire, causing the tank to burn. Saltwater is a byproduct of oil production.

<http://www.inforum.com/event/article/id/367445/group/homepage/>

USA, OH, TUSCARAWAS CO, BOLIVAR

JULY 17 2012.

1 DEAD IN BOLIVAR WELL EXPLOSION

One person was confirmed dead from an oil- and natural gas-well explosion Monday morning, but authorities will need additional time to provide positive identification of the victim and an exact cause of the explosion that sent flames and an oil holding tank high into the sky and created a blanket of intense heat that could be felt across the street.

The explosion, believed to have occurred about 9:30 a.m., was in Lawrence Township at a site about two miles south of Bolivar in the vicinity of Bolivar Group Home at 10071 State Route 212, near the Wilkshire Hills subdivision.

Dr. James Hubert, Tuscarawas County coroner, said late Monday that the victim's name won't be released until identity is confirmed through the use of dental records. Hubert said once the victim's dental records are acquired and examined by a specialist, he should be able to confirm the victim's identity by the end of the week.

The victim, believed to be a 19-year-old male, was painting at the well site, according to Bolivar Fire Capt. Marty Huth, who served as incident commander at the scene Monday.

The actions of that individual, who is believed to have been employed by the owner of the well, are being considered as a possible cause of the explosion, according to a statement Monday night from the Tuscarawas County Sheriff's Office.

Witnesses had initially reported seeing two workers at the well site, leading to speculation that the blast may have claimed a second victim.

"However, one was later located and confirmed to have left that well site prior to the explosion to check on other wells," said Sheriff's Detective Capt. Orvis Campbell.

The explosion, which blew the oil holding tank high into the air and ignited grass and trees for about 100 yards in all directions, was reported to the county's emergency dispatch center at 9:50 a.m., according to 911 records.

Witnesses, however, said the blast occurred between 9:30 and 9:34 a.m.

The county's 911 Center received so many calls that it could not answer them all.

Huth said his department initially was called out to investigate a natural gas odor, but in less than three minutes the call was changed to "heavy smoke and flames."

He said several fires were burning when his department arrived at the scene. Huth said firefighters had most of the tree and grass fires under control about 18 minutes after being dispatched.

Huth said firefighters allowed the gas well itself to continue burning to prevent another explosion until additional help from other area fire departments could arrive.

Nathan Mutschelknaus of Dover, an employee of the group home owned and operated by Horizons, was an eye-witness to the explosion.

"I was out back, pressure-washing the porch and moving some of the furniture when the ground started to shake. I was looking over at the oil well, wondering what was shaking. Next thing I know, I heard the loud explosion and felt the shockwave," Mutschelknaus told The Times-Reporter.

Mutschelknaus said he then saw the holding tank shoot up high into the air, and as it flew, oil leaked out onto the ground below and was running down the driveway near the group home.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

"Then I heard the tank land over there," Mutschelknaus said, gesturing toward the tank's landing site in a field on the opposite side of the driveway. "I got a little scared, because I didn't realize at that point that stuff was flying out of there," he added, referring to the well site.

Mutschelknaus and two other group-home employees, Leslie Roney and Melody Alexander, estimated the well flames were rising about 100 feet into the air at that time. He said the driveway and surrounding grass areas all were ablaze.

"(It was) like a rocket," said Roney, as she recalled seeing the holding tank fly.

The Sheriff's Office statement said the tank was propelled an estimated 300 feet into the sky.

"The explosion shook the whole house," said Alexander. "I looked out the window and I was like ... there's a fire in the back yard, and we went running."

All three agreed that "some awesome citizens" stopped to assist them as fire enveloped the area and threatened the group home.

Among them was Russ Sands of Zoarville, who was driving by on Route 212 with his 10-year-old granddaughter, Felicity, when he saw the holding tank "go up in the air. It was pretty high."

Then Sands saw a huge cloud of black smoke, and he stopped to assist with watering down the group home and its surrounding area with a garden hose.

Brandie Hanley, who resides on Hess Mill Road NE, on the opposite side of Route 212, said the explosion shook her whole apartment, causing the rear and basement doors to pop open.

"I came outside because I thought someone had wrecked into the house," she said. That's when she saw the holding tank in the air and felt the ground shake as it landed, creating "instant black smoke and flames."

Hanley said the time was "right around 9:30 a.m." She attempted to call 911, but could not get through.

An amateur photographer, Hanley got her camera to begin taking photographs, but discovered the battery was dead. She replaced the battery and in a few minutes was taking some of the earliest photos of the disaster area.

Hanley said she first thought an airplane had crashed. But as soon as she could see through the thick smoke, Hanley realized it was something else.

Hanley used a telephoto lens and stayed away from the scene. "The heat from the fire was so hot I could feel it across the street," she said.

Huth said the investigation is being handled by the state Fire Marshal's Office, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Oil and Gas Division, as well as the Tuscarawas County Sheriff's Department.

Published reports indicate the well is owned by MKE Producing, a private investment group.

<http://www.cantonrep.com/newsnow/x1062475088/1-dead-in-Bolivar-well-explosion>

AUSTRALIA, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

JULY 18 2012.

MAN KILLED IN WORK EXPLOSION

A man has been killed in an explosion at a Welshpool business. Arson squad investigators and firefighters were called to the Welshpool Road business just before 2pm. Welshpool station officer Graeme Green said initial reports were that there was smoke coming from the building. When firefighters arrived they found smoke coming from the side of the property. "We attended and put out the smoke and at the same time found a person had been injured by an explosion," Mr Green said. "At the moment it is subject to an investigation, but it looks like a vaporisation has caused the tank to explode." Mr Green said investigators would examine whether the worker was using an angle grinder on a large fuel tank moments before it exploded. "The blast was quite extensive, it has blown the ends of the tank out and damaged the buildings on both sides," he said. They have not released any details about the man's age. WorkSafe inspectors are investigating the death of a man.

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/wa/14245926/man-reportedly-killed-in-work-explosion/>

USA, TX, ROCKPORT

JULY 19 2012.

LIGHTNING STRIKE CAUSES OIL TANKER FIRE IN ROCKPORT

An oil-tank battery fire sent flames and smoke up into the air just north of Fulton for more than an hour Wednesday. A passerby said it was started by a lightning strike.

It happened along FM 1781, near the Aransas County Airport, and by around noon on Wednesday, the fire was out.

Two firefighters had to be treated for heat exhaustion, but are okay. As the fire raged on, firefighters with half a dozen agencies battled the flames.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

When the fire began, emergency crews raced to the scene. In all, two tank batteries were destroyed, but quick action from firefighters kept the blaze from spreading. It put up lots of smoke, which could be seen from several miles away.

The lightning strike hit the tank on property belonging to Derrick Construction, according to officials on the scene. Luckily, no one was seriously hurt, and no one had to be evacuated.

However, police did shut down FM 1781 as a precaution.

Firefighters' first priority was to find out what was burning inside those tanks. According to Fulton Fire Chief Rickey McLester, the tank that was struck was mostly salt water, but contained some crude oil. The lightning strike caused the tank to burst, which then caused the fire to spread around the property.

Throughout the battle, firefighters also had to deal with the extreme heat. Luckily, the fire corps provided them with plenty of water and shade.

Emergency management stepped in as well, such as the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

Fire officials said it could have been a lot worse.

<http://www.kiiitv.com/story/19059191/lightning-strike-causes-oil-tanker-fire-in-rockport>

USA, WI, GREEN BAY

JULY 20 2012.

SECTION OF MAJOR FUEL PIPELINE FROM CHICAGO TO GREEN BAY SHUTDOWN AFTER LEAK

A section of a major fuel pipeline between Chicago and Green Bay has been shut down after a significant gasoline leak.

Buckeye Partners says it closed a 10-mile section of the West Shore pipeline when its equipment indicated a change in pressure about 10 miles northwest of Milwaukee, WBAY-TV reported. The leak was reportedly detected just before noon on Tuesday.

A significant leak of gasoline was then discovered near Elkhart Lake, Wisc., where 1,000 barrels of unleaded automotive gasoline spilled from a break in the pipeline, according to a filing with the National Response Center.

The 650-mile long, 10-inch diameter pipeline transports gasoline, diesel and jet fuel to Green Bay from Chicago at a capacity of 70,000 barrels a day.

Crews were on the scene, repairing the pipeline and assessing any environmental damage that likely occurred.

Some residents in the area were evacuated after complaints of headaches, upset stomachs and nausea, FOX 6-TV reported. But the company says the impact appears to be very limited.

"We have fixed monitors in the area as well as handheld monitors, and we haven't registered any concerns to the risk of the residents at this time," Patrick Hodgins, Director of West Shore Pipeline said.

The company is investigating what caused the change in pressure that led to the leak.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration says they have an inspector at the scene and will investigate whether the operator is in compliance with federal safety regulations.

In a released statement, the company said that the pipeline system will remain closed until it is deemed safe by company officials and regulatory authorities.

<http://www.examiner.com/article/section-of-major-fuel-pipeline-from-chicago-to-green-bay-shutdown-after-leak>

USA, PA, PITTSBURGH, DERRY TWP

JULY 22 2012.

LIGHTNING STRIKES A GAS WELL TANK IN WESTMORELAND CO.

"In Derry Township, a lightning strike sparked a fire in a condensate tank at a non-Marcellus Shale CNX gas well near the intersection of state Route 982 and Laughlin Farm Road. "The 500-gallon fiberglass tank was struck about 3:30 p.m., according to the state Department of Environmental Protection, causing a fire that burned for an hour, melting the tank and causing a spill of about 440 gallons of oily "wet gases." "The Westmoreland County hazardous materials team used foam designed for gas fires to quell the 10-foot flames. Crews then let the fire burn itself out. Nearby residents were not affected by the fire, Westmoreland County emergency management spokesman Dan Stevens said. "The spilled gas was contained by a dike around the tank. DEP inspectors plan to visit the site this morning."

<http://www.democraticunderground.com/10741978>

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

USA, TX, ROCKPORT

JULY 19 2012.

LIGHTNING STRIKE CAUSES OIL TANKER FIRE IN ROCKPORT

A lightning strike is believed to be what caused a tank fire on FM 1781 about a mile and a half north of Rockport near the Aransas County Airport.

It happened around 11:20 this morning on property owned by Derrick Construction.

We're told lightning struck one tank containing a minimal amount of petroleum, and that explosion set fire to 2 other fiberglass tanks containing salt water.

Fulton Volunteer Fire Chief Rickey Mc Lester also told us none of the oil leaked into nearby Copano Bay.

Fire crews from Rockport, Fulton, Ingleside, Aransas Pass, and Lamar used flame-retardant foam to put out the fire in an hour and a half.

Tammie Shelton was working at nearby Camp Aranzazu when it happened. "I saw the lightning. I heard the kaboom! I saw the flames come up instantly right at the same time," she said.

No one was on the property at the time and no one was injured. A nearby house was not damaged either.

<http://www.kristv.com/news/rockport-tank-fire-sparked-by-lightning/>

UK, JERSEY

JULY 4 2012.

JERSEY GAS FACILITY FIRE LEAVES HUNDREDS STRANDED OVERNIGHT

Jersey Gas said the holder would be out of service by the end of Wednesday with no gas then stored in central St Helier.

Thousands of people had to leave their homes, businesses and schools for up to 24 hours during the fire in Gas Place.

Workers were doing maintenance on the cylinder when it caught fire at the beginning of the month.

The firm has worked with health and safety experts and the fire service to decide the safest way of taking it out of action.

The remaining gas will be removed on Wednesday by what is called a controlled flaring operation.

The gas company says it is a safe process but could be noisy and create a heat haze.

Homes, schools and businesses were evacuated and roads sealed off after a back-up gas holder caught fire.

Firefighters are tackling the blaze at Gas Place and Jersey Fire Service has urged people to stay out of the area.

A Jersey Police spokeswoman said they were dealing with a fire and a gas leak and there was a risk of explosion.

Flames and smoke could be seen from across the town.

Jersey Fire service said people living within the roads immediately surrounding the fire had been evacuated and would not be able to return on Wednesday night.

The only houses that need to be evacuated are Tunnel Street (immediately adjacent to the site) St Saviour's Road from Tunnel Street to Simon Place and Simon Place to Ann Street (bar the last few houses).

People living within the wider 400m exclusion zone have been told to remain in their homes with windows and doors closed.

'Very traumatic'

Chief of Police Mike Bowron said it would be "grossly inconvenient night for many people".

People displaced are being told to visit the Town Hall in St Helier or call the support line on 01534 612000.

Some people are being put up at Fort Regent and others in churches but police are urging people to try to stay with family or friends.

He said: "Subject to technical advice and fire advice, our best guess is to get people back by rush hour tomorrow.

"We are relying on assistance from friends, relatives, who can take the pressure of States services tonight."

A Beaulieu school student said: "We have come from Beaulieu and were dismissed early today.

"Lots of the students were crying and it was a very traumatic experience."

A spokesman for Jersey Gas said one employee, a plant fitter, had minor burns to the face and another was treated for shock.

Three options

He said the gas holder provided back-up gas and there was currently no risk of islanders' supplies being affected.

The top of the tank has buckled. The spokesman said this did not increase the risk of the incident escalating.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Jersey Fire Service said there were three options they were considering.

A spokesman said: "Option A is to allow it to continue to burn and control that burn down until there is none left.

We are asking people to avoid the area and if they are residents who have not been evacuated to stay indoors with their windows closed"

"Option B is to try and extinguish the flame, which is a much smaller flame now, and then try and contain the vapour release.

"Option C is to pump gas back into the gas holder, that sounds like an odd thing to do, but it maintains the strength and structure of the holder.

"With the burn-down strategy the potential is the structure could collapse and exacerbate the problems."

Steve Coleman from the Jersey animal shelter said the 265 animals in their care would not be moved this evening, despite the shelter being within the exclusion zone.

He said he had spoken to the police and the animals had been bedded down because there was nowhere for them to go.

Mr Coleman said he would check on the animals this evening and staff hoped to return to the shelter at 08:00 BST.

Code red status

The police spokeswoman said the fire had been declared a major incident.

"We are asking people to avoid the area and if they are residents who have not been evacuated to stay indoors with their windows closed," she said.

The code red status of the blaze has meant all off-duty fire crews have been called into work.

Parents were asked to pick up their children from the seven schools that were evacuated.

Seven schools have been closed due to a possible change in wind direction.

They are Springfield, Beaulieu, De La Salle, Victoria College, Victoria College Prep, JCG and JCG Prep.

As well as the schools La Petite Ecole, St Mark's Road, Charlie Farleys Too, Leeward and Little Oaks are also closed.

Customers and staff at the Co-op Grand Marche were told to leave the store and staff from the Royal Bank of Scotland in Bath Street were sent home.

Connex said some bus services had been cancelled.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-jersey-18709055>

UK, JERSEY

JULY 10 2012.

JERSEY GAS HOLDER FIRE STARTED WHILE WORKERS FIXED A LEAK

Jersey's Fire and Rescue Service has been investigating the cause of the fire which caused thousands of people to be evacuated from homes, schools and businesses last week.

A Jersey Gas worker suffered facial burns and one other employee was treated for shock.

Investigators have examined the scene, CCTV evidence and interviewed Jersey Gas employees.

A Fire Service spokesman said the fire developed quickly and attacked the joints in the tank.

He said: "This caused the joints to leak substantial amounts of gas to create a wall of fire."

The type of equipment used by the workers has not been revealed as it form part of the investigation.

Neil Shaw, chairman of Jersey Gas, said: "We acknowledge the findings of the Fire and Rescue Service investigation and can confirm that we will continue to co-operate fully with the ongoing Health and Safety Inspectorate investigation.

"We would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the Fire and Rescue Service and all of the emergency services and community groups who played a key role in bringing the incident to a safe conclusion."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-jersey-18780453>

UK, JERSEY

JULY 28 2012.

JERSEY GAS TANK TO BE DE-COMMISSIONED AFTER FIRE

Jersey Gas said the holder would be out of service by the end of Wednesday with no gas then stored in central St Helier.

Thousands of people had to leave their homes, businesses and schools for up to 24 hours during the fire in Gas Place.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Workers were doing maintenance on the cylinder when it caught fire at the beginning of the month.

The firm has worked with health and safety experts and the fire service to decide the safest way of taking it out of action.

The remaining gas will be removed on Wednesday by what is called a controlled flaring operation.

The gas company says it is a safe process but could be noisy and create a heat haze.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-jersey-19006052>

USA, WA, CLE ELUM

JULY 28 2012.

CREWS WORK TO CLEAN UP CLE ELUM GAS SPILL

A fuel truck driver overtopped an above-ground fuel storage tank at the 76 gas station in Cle Elum early Monday morning, spilling about 550 gallons of gasoline.

The state Department of Ecology is overseeing the cleanup operation at the gas station at 1001 E. First St., in Cle Elum. DOE spokeswoman Joye Redfield-Wilder said it wasn't the gas station operators who caused the spill, but a truck driver for R.E. Powell Distributing Co. of Grandview.

"It overtopped, meaning it was left unattended and spilled over the top," Redfield-Wilder said. "They're estimating 550 gallons spilled to the ground."

The base beneath the 9,500-gallon above-ground tank is gravel and the gasoline seeped into the ground and has reached the groundwater, she said. A cleanup crew is working to capture as much gasoline as it can.

R.E. Powell is charged with cleaning up the spill, Redfield-Wilder said. A message left for the company by the Daily Record was not immediately returned.

The spill happened between 1 and 2 a.m. Monday morning.

"It wasn't reported to us until much later," Redfield-Wilder said.

A cleanup firm was contacted Monday. DOE was notified of the spill on Tuesday. Some type of enforcement action could be considered, Redfield-Wilder said.

The first stage is determining how much fuel spilled and how far it went into the ground, she said. It could be localized to the immediate area, but groundwater moves.

Until DOE knows the extent of the problem, officials won't know how long cleanup will take. In the meantime, the gas station and convenience store remain open.

Everyone near the spill is on city water so there isn't a concern of fuel getting into people's water, Redfield-Wilder said.

http://www.dailyrecordnews.com/top_story/crews-work-to-clean-up-cle-elum-gas-spill/article_954f091c-d812-11e1-8b0c-001a4bcf887a.html

USA, FLA, MELBOURNE

JULY 28 2012.

EPA LAUNCHES CHEMICAL CLEANUP IN WEST MELBOURNE

SCORES OF CONTAINERS SAT UNSECURED IN TRAILERS, TRUCKS IN WEST MELBOURNE

Jim Waymer

The soles of his shoes melted when a general contractor happened upon thousands of chemical containers stashed inside trailers off Dike Road in 2010.

There were so many, state investigators had planned to bring in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to help.

But before EPA could take action, the trailers mysteriously disappeared.

Now, state investigators say some of the same chemical-filled trailers have become part of an estimated \$110,000 federal cleanup this month just down the road, at 1080 S. John Rodes Blvd. in West Melbourne.

U.S. Department of Defense officials are investigating whether some of the chemicals came from Navy or other military facilities and are trying to figure out who should be responsible for the cleanup.

Some 3,500 containers of hazardous substances sat unsecured in the seven trailers and two box trucks on the north side of the John Rodes property for an unknown period of time.

Flammable liquids, strong acids and bases seeped underneath the trailers, near a drainage canal and within 100 yards of residential areas Sheridan Lakes to the south and Greenwood Village to the east. Interstate 95 runs about 500 yards to the west.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency officials secured the site earlier this month. The agency is in talks with the military to determine when the chemicals can be hauled to a hazardous waste landfill out of state. It's uncertain

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

whether any chemicals seeped into the groundwater.

"If we'd had a fire out there, our concern was 'nobody knew the stuff was there,' " said Janine Kraemer, an environmental manager for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in Orlando, who's inspected the site. "We do believe some has leaked onto the ground but we don't have any evidence that it's leaked into the canal."

Graffiti on some of the trailers left traces that trespassers had come close to the chemicals, some of which oozed from drum lids and leaked from pin-sized holes in the containers.

"It's all secured at this point," Kraemer added. "The leaks that we've seen have been contained to right under the trailers."

But DEP inspectors found so many chemical containers and drums at the site they decided to call in EPA's National Response Center Emergency Response and Removal Branch in Tallahassee to help.

On July 13, EPA responders put a chain-link and barbed-wire fence around the trailers and "no trespassing" signs at the property's gate.

Labels on some of the chemicals traced them back to the Navy, according to DEP documents, and some of the substances may be more than 20 years old.

Wayne Dickinson, a Brevard County resident, would buy chemicals from the U.S. Defense Logistics Agency, according to Thomas Lubozynski, DEP's waste program administrator. "DLA, using its Defense Reutilization and Marketing Offices, would sell chemicals that the Department of Defense or other government agencies, such as NASA, could no longer use," Lubozynski said by email.

"Oftentimes the chemicals were still useful, but had passed their stated expiration date," Lubozynski said. "Dickinson could sell the chemicals to others who were willing to use them. The discovered chemicals were ones that he had not been able to sell, even though he had owned them for many years."

None have been documented as from the space program.

"We didn't see any labels that said NASA on them," Kraemer said.

No landfill in Florida can accept such hazardous material, Kraemer said, so they must be shipped out of state to a hazardous waste landfill.

Among the waste was 20 drums of exo-tetrahydrocyclopentadiene — a chemical used as high-power fuel, as well as in pesticides, medicines, photosensitive and IT materials.

One of the main chemicals found was potassium hydroxide, also called potash lye. The Navy uses it in submarines to clean the resins in treatment systems that distill seawater through reverse osmosis, among other uses.

"We're premature in figuring if it's in the groundwater or not," Chris Russell, of EPA's emergency response and removal branch, said of the chemicals. "There really wasn't that many that were leaking," he said of the containers. "Our concern was some kids could get in there and start playing around."

DEP officials say the situation dates back to 2010, when the agency received a complaint of improper storage of tires and abandoned hazardous waste.

According to a complaint filed with DEP in July 2010 by a relative of the property owner, Dickinson had been leasing property at 293 Dike Road. The owners were worried cars, tires and other items at the site were not permitted by the lease agreement and were code violations. The owner ultimately initiated eviction proceedings, the complaint said, and hired a general contractor to remove the waste tires and scrap metal. The contractor found unlabeled drums, and the soles of his shoes melted when he entered one of the trailers.

During that investigation, the chemicals disappeared. DEP officials said they asked Dickinson what happened with the chemicals, and to provide documentation that they were disposed of property. He never did, DEP's Kraemer said.

Dickinson hired an attorney and refused to answer any questions in 2010, but admitted during the July 11, 2012 site inspection to moving them to the John Rodes site, Kraemer said.

Calls from FLORIDA TODAY to Dickinson and the Melbourne attorney who has represented him were not returned.

Owners of the John Rodes property, Michael C. Smith and Mireille Smith, also could not be reached for comment Friday.

On Feb. 17 of this year, an owner of another nearby property on Dike Road discovered two people on his property dumping containers of potassium hydroxide. West Melbourne police arrested the men thought responsible but prosecutors dropped the case because of lack of evidence, according to DEP documents.

The military cleaned up that site after the owners traced the chemicals back to the Navy.

Officials are in the process of determining where all the chemicals originated and who should be responsible for paying for the cleanup.

Dickinson, according to DEP, said he could not afford the removal cost of the chemicals.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

The materials had been advertised on the craigslist website earlier this month, including an offer of free 55-gallon drums of epoxy paints and glues, listing a phone number and saying call "Wayne" for information.

DEP has an open case pending against Dickinson, for potential hazardous waste violations.

"He did not get a permit" to store the waste, Kraemer said.

What they found

Here are some of the chemicals found at 1080 John Rodes Blvd., West Melbourne:

- 90 quart containers of Flexform coating compound (epoxy)
- 270 two-gallon containers of potassium hydroxide
- 15 one-quart containers of polyamide (used in automotives, textiles and carpet)
- 154 one-pint containers of lube oil
- 100 one-pint containers of resin
- 414 lube oil containers contained in 23 boxes (18 containers per box)
- 64 drums of two-part epoxy adhesive and 20 drums of exo-tetrahydrocyclopentadiene.
- 150 aerosol cans of corrosion prevention cleaner
- 1,200 one-gallon containers of epoxy adhesive

http://www.floridatoday.com/article/20120728/NEWS01/307280017/EPA-launches-chemical-cleanup-West-Melbourne?nclick_check=1

USA, W.VA, NEW MARTINSVILLE

AUGUST 2 2012

GASOLINE LEAKS FROM VERTICAL TANK

Approximately 6,000 gallons of gasoline is believed to have leaked from a vertical storage tank at Tri-State Petroleum at 98 Main Street, New Martinsville, Tuesday.

New Martinsville Fire Chief Larry Couch said the 16,000-gallon tank contained 87 octane unleaded gasoline. While they don't know how much gasoline the tank contained at the time of the incident, they do know it contained 11,000 gallons at the start of the business day.

The staging area for fuel loading is not typically manned. "One of the trucks apparently accidentally caught part of the plumbing as it was leaving the scene," said Couch. "It tore the housing for the valves away from the bottom of the tank." He said apparently the driver didn't realize he vehicle had caused damage to the three-inch valve.

The NMFVD received the call of a fuel leak at 12:12 p.m. He does not know how long the tank leaked before the call came in.

As required by law, the area does have a dike to prevent spills outside of the area. Couch believes 1-2,000 gallons may have leaked into the ground. But the good news is they do not believe any fuel made its way to the adjacent waterways.

"To this point we haven't seen any sheen come up in Fishing Creek or the Ohio River."

The emergency responders set up a temporary chute to run the leaking fuel from the compromised tank into a portable water tank. The fuel was then off-loaded into fuel trucks. "We were able to recover over 4,000 gallons of gasoline," stated Couch.

The incident caused the evacuation of several buildings in the immediate vicinity, but caused no fire, explosion, or other known hazards. The New Martinsville Police Department evacuated, on order of Couch, five houses and several businesses including West Virginia Northern Community College.

New Martinsville Electric Department workers shut off electricity to the area and the New Martinsville Street Department closed streets in the vicinity.

The NMFVD was also assisted by the Clarington, Sardis, and Paden City fire departments. "All of the help from the neighboring communities was a true asset today," noted Couch. The entire incident lasted five hours.

The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection and United States Environmental Protection Agency came to the scene to assure compliance and assure proper clean up. Tri-State Petroleum has contracted with Weavertown Environmental to remediate the site, which will begin this morning.

"I will be back there tomorrow conferring with WVDEP and USEPA to follow up and make sure everything is going well," said Couch Tuesday evening.

<http://www.wetzelchronicle.com/page/content.detail/id/511431/Gasoline-Leaks-Gasoline-Leaks-From-Vertical-Tank-Vertical-Tank.html?nav=5001>

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

USA, OK, ELK CITY

AUGUST 13, 2012.

HYDRAULIC FRACTURING MATERIALS INVOLVED IN OKLA. BLAST

Juliana Keeping

An explosion at a trucking company involved materials used in hydraulic fracturing, a fire official in Elk City said Sunday.

About 100 people were evacuated from their homes Saturday after the explosion that injured two people and sent flames and a plume of black smoke into the air about 9 a.m. at Hodges Trucking, 2491 S Merritt. Firefighters remained on the scene until 7 p.m., about the same time those evacuated were allowed to return home, Elk City Fire Department Capt. Jackie Addington said.

Addington said the explosion was in the business's yard and described the material inside a "frac tank" apparently involved in the incident as "highly explosive."

According to its website, Hodges Trucking is an oil-field and heavy haul transportation company and an affiliate of Chesapeake Energy Corporation. Elk City is about 100 miles west of Oklahoma City.

One injured person was taken by air to Oklahoma City for treatment, Addington said. Another victim was taken to Great Plains Medical Center in Elk City.

A man was treated and released at the medical center, said Monte Deramus, a Great Plains hospital administrator.

Addington did not have information on the victims' names or conditions.

No firefighters were injured in the blaze, which remains under investigation, Addington said.

Bob Jarvis, manager of corporate communications for Chesapeake Oilfield Services, a subsidiary of Chesapeake Energy Corporation, said by email Sunday the investigation to determine a cause of the fire is ongoing. The person being treated in Oklahoma City is expected to be released in the next day or two, he said.

<http://www.firehouse.com/news/10758620/hydraulic-fracturing-materials-involved-in-okla-blast>

USA, WY, CASPER

AUGUST 17, 2012.

STORAGE CONTAINER TRAPS, KILLS CASPER WORKER

A worker who died Thursday at a Baker Hughes building was found trapped underneath a 500-gallon metal storage container, a Natrona County sheriff's official said Friday.

David Morgan of Casper was alone when he died. Another worker found him and called authorities about 2:30 p.m. Thursday, Lt. Mark Sellers said.

The 65-year-old Morgan died at the scene. Investigators are still examining the circumstances of his death, but consider it an industrial accident, Sellers said. Foul play is not suspected.

The container was storing gasoline additives and weighed roughly 4,000 pounds.

Investigators aren't sure exactly when Morgan died, because no one else was around at the time.

An autopsy is scheduled for Monday. A preliminary examination indicated Morgan suffered a traumatic crush injury to his upper body, Natrona County Coroner Connie Jacobson said.

The accident occurred at a Baker Hughes building on Mid Way Road in Natrona County.

A Baker Hughes spokeswoman did not return a message left Friday seeking comment.

http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming/storage-container-traps-kills-casper-worker/article_3d07bd71-996a-5ba4-b778-2350b3feb2f3.html#ixzz24COVDSWw

USA, LA, BELLE CHASSE

AUGUST 18, 2012.

EVACUATION ORDER LIFTED NEAR BELLE CHASSE CHEMICAL PLANT

A mandatory evacuation order was lifted Saturday morning for residents near the Sun Drilling Chemical plant in Belle Chasse.

The all-clear was given shortly before 10 a.m. As of 8:00 a.m. the situation had been stabilized and the immediate danger over, according to State Police, which had become the lead investigating agency.

Trooper Nick Manale, a State Police spokesman, said Saturday that the situation was a chemical release and not a fire caused by a lightning strike, as was originally believed.

People were evacuated, Manale said, because of the possibility that a tank involved might explode and cause a more serious leak.

The chemical reaction at the plant near Main and G Streets near the Belle Chasse ferry caused the evacuation

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

of some nearby residents and some government buildings, including the district attorney's office, the sheriff's office and the council building.

Initially, officials said a lightning strike sparked a fire in a chemical tank, releasing chemicals and prompting road closures and voluntary evacuations. Then officials called mandatory evacuations, saying the tank began to swell and they feared an explosion.

But by 10 p.m. officials said the tank wasn't swelling, and there may not have been a lightning strike or a fire. Instead they said the tank, which contains about 2000 gallons of a hazardous material called divinylbenzene, was having a chemical reaction.

And the smoke seen earlier Friday may have been the result of nitrogen firefighters used to try to cool the tank. But that hasn't worked and the tank remained volatile, with the possibility of an explosion.

Officials continue to test air quality and have found no dangers. The biggest threat now remains the volatile tank. A crew from Baton Rouge brought a chemical stabilizer, but that neutralizer could take hours to work.

"There is no catastrophic failure right now as was said earlier, but we're going to do it as a precaution, it's for public safety to keep this evacuation area clear, until we have the tank stabilized and the chemical reaction is stopped," said Sgt. Joe Piglia of Louisiana State Police.

"Whenever you talk about the possibility of an explosion, you talk in two terms, plumes which is the air and fragments which is when it explodes, the fragments run out. Whenever you set up a safe zone, you take those things into consideration," said Guy Laigast, Plaquemines Parish Emergency Management director.

Statement from Sun Drilling Products Corporation:

Sun Drilling Products Corporation ("Sun") is currently investigating an incident at its Belle Chasse plant which occurred on August 17th, 2012 at approximately 1:30 p.m.

As reported by at least one eyewitness, it is believed that the facility sustained a direct lightning strike which triggered a reaction in the facility's divinylbenzene raw material storage tank inside the facility. The reaction was contained to the raw material storage tank. That area of the manufacturing plant had been shut down at the time and no one on site was injured.

The incident is under investigation by the Company and Louisiana DEQ. SUN is cooperating with all local and state authorities to determine the full extent and impact of the event.

Sun is a closely held oilfield and specialty products company employing approximately 30 people in Belle Chasse.

<http://www.wvltv.com/news/Chemical-release-fire-in-Belle-Chasse--166568096.html>

USA, FL, JACKSONVILLE

AUGUST 18, 2012.

TURPENTINE TANK EXPLODES AT JACKSONVILLE PLANT, NORTH LANE AVENUE CLOSED AS A PRECAUTION

Hazmat teams worked to clean up after a chemical explosion Saturday morning at the International Flavors and Fragrances plant on the Westside.

People working across the street from the plant at 2051 North Lane Ave. said the blast was so strong, their walls shook.

"I was at work and heard a loud noise and I walked outside and I saw smoke," Eli Kervin said. "And then I saw the fire trucks and police cars and everybody and I tried to see what happened."

Jacksonville Fire-Rescue said a 250,000 gallon tank of turpentine products, a little less than half full, caught on fire, causing a vapor explosion. Sixty firefighters and hazmat crews worked to put the fire out.

JFRD said they still aren't sure what triggered the explosion.

"Turpentine, as you know, is a product from pine trees and stuff, but it is flammable and under high heat conditions like today, you will have a vapor and vapor can flash," JFRD Chief of Operations Chip Drysdale said.

There were workers on top of the tank doing welding work when the tanks exploded, but they weren't hurt. The only damage done was to the roof and surrounding trees.

The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office kept the street blocked off for hours following the explosion, but JFRD said it was done as a precaution and no one in the community was in any real danger. Firefighters said no one had to be evacuated and vapor exposure was not a concern.

"Turpentine is not something you want to eat or drink but the fumes themselves are not particularly nauseous," Drysdale said.

<http://www.news4jax.com/news/Turpentine-tank-explodes-at-Westside-plant-in-Jacksonville/-/475880/16183852/-/v5xpg/-/index.html>

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

UK, JERSEY, HELIER

AUGUST 3 2012.

JERSEY COMPANY BURNS OFF GAS FROM TANK IN ST HELIER

Homes, schools and businesses were evacuated after the tank caught fire

A gas tank in St Helier which caught fire and nearly exploded after problems with maintenance works is being emptied. All gas in Jersey will come from the site at La Collette from Friday after the Tunnell Street facility is decommissioned. Experts will use nitrogen to displace the gas before putting it through a process called "control flaring". Jersey Gas said this was to make sure none is released into the atmosphere. The company said no-one would be able to smell or hear the gas being removed and work would be finished by late on Thursday. Thousands of people had to leave their homes, businesses and schools for up to 24 hours during the fire in Gas Place. Workers were doing maintenance on the cylinder when it caught fire at the beginning of the month.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-jersey-19068997>

USA, N.Y, POUGHKEEPSIE

AUGUST 5 2012.

I-84 OPEN AFTER ACCIDENT

Assumption Parish officials said powerful underground forces unleashed by the formation of an acre-sized swamp land sinkhole had bent and shifted an adjacent 36-inch natural gas pipeline, posing an explosion risk to nearby motorists.

As a result, the officials said, they shut down vehicular traffic about 7:30 p.m. Saturday over a four-mile stretch of La. 70 South in Pierre Part and Bayou Corne while the pipeline operator, Crosstex Energy L.P., of Dallas, worked to depressurize the line.

John Boudreaux, director of the parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, said the pipeline was not leaking but presented an explosion risk if it would rupture.

Assumption Parish Sheriff Mike Waguespack noted that two 20-inch natural gas pipelines owned by Acadian Gas run parallel to the Crosstex line and also were at risk from Crosstex's line.

"If one of them goes, probably all three of them go," Waguespack said.

He said the Crosstex pipeline has an operating pressure of 800 pounds per square inch.

An evacuation order remained in place Saturday but area residents were not being forced to leave their homes, Waguespack said.

Officials handling the emergency estimated about 350 people occupy about 150 residences in the Bayou Corne community.

Fears that the sinkhole area could expand, shear off nearby wellheads and release flammable materials prompted Friday's evacuation order by parish officials.

But Assumption Parish President Martin "Marty" Triche said the slurry area had not grown in size as of Saturday evening.

Boudreaux said the decision to close La. 70 — a major east-west corridor — was required because the pipeline crosses under the highway just east of Bayou Corne.

Boudreaux said the compromised section of pipeline stretches about 400 feet in length about a half-mile south of La. 70. The pipeline has bent 16 feet downward and 15 feet to the east toward the sinkhole.

Crosstex spokeswoman Jill McMillan said in an email that company personnel have responded and "their highest priority is to ensure the safety of all involved."

"As a precautionary measure, Crosstex has isolated and shut down the pipeline," McMillan wrote. "We're currently depressurizing the pipeline, and we expect this to be complete by Sunday evening."

Waguespack said the road closure would extend from La. 69 and La. 70 southwest to Derrick Street in Pierre Part. He said Derrick is the closest point to the pipeline crossing where 18-wheelers can turn around and find a suitable departure route.

He said that while residents have been advised of the risk of remaining, they would be able to continue to access their homes off La. 70 but would not be able to drive into the area where the pipeline crosses under La. 70.

News of the endangered pipeline emerged Saturday afternoon after officials and curious residents had taken airboats down the Crosstex pipeline corridor to get a closer look at the slurry area and take air and soil samples.

The big sinkhole swallowed and toppled trees overnight Thursday, turning the formerly forested patch of swamp into a watery mud flat flecked with bits of green foliage and tree tops peeking out of the dark-brown muck.

Louisiana Department of Natural Resources officials believe a potentially failed salt cavern well owned by Texas Brine Co. LLC, of Houston, could be the cause of the sinkhole, as well as natural gas releases bubbling in Bayou

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Corne and Grand Bayou for more than two months.

Joe S. Ball Jr., director of DNR's Injection and Mining Division, said some scientists are suggesting that a large gas bubble belched upward from underground and reached the surface, liquefying the overlying soil and creating the slurry.

Ball said Louisiana Geological Survey officials have called a meeting for 9 a.m. Monday at LSU where geologists and scientists would be able to see all the data at one time.

Parish officials also are planning to hold a community meeting at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday in the St. Joseph the Worker Catholic Church Hall on La. 70 in Pierre Part, a parish government news release says.

Gov. Bobby Jindal declared a statewide emergency Friday and the state Office of Conservation issued its own emergency order Friday directing Texas Brine to evaluate the structural integrity of its salt cavern and to begin remediation efforts in 24 hours.

Sonny Cranch, spokesman for Texas Brine, said the company is committed to working with state and parish authorities to find out what caused the eruption and perform any remediation deemed appropriate.

Cranch said company employees were working on a plan Saturday. He declined to provide details before DNR looked at the document.

While DNR officials have pointed to the cavern as a possible, though not confirmed, cause, Cranch said Texas Brine does not know if the salt cavern is related one way or the other.

"We're saying, 'We're not sure, but we want to find out,'" he said.

Cranch said none of Texas Brine's three brine caverns are used for hydrocarbon storage. DNR officials have speculated that naturally occurring gas could have filled the cavern in question after it was plugged.

The slurry area is on Texas Brine's 40-acre facility on the south side of La. 70. The sinkhole could be seen Saturday through a patch of cypress trees from the pad of the salt cavern well drawing DNR officials' attention.

The cavern under that pad, which has a capacity of 20 million barrels, each holding 42 gallons of brine, has been plugged since 2011. It has been out of service for brine production for three years but is filled with brine for structural integrity, Cranch said.

The cavern's solid salt deposits were dissolved with injected water from the western flank of the Napoleonville Dome and extend from about 3,400 feet deep to 5,650 feet deep.

Texas Brine and other brine producers in the area use the salty mix to supply industry. Texas Brine has been operating in the area since 1973 and began using the well in 1982, DNR officials said.

Cranch said the cavern, which is in roughly the shape of a narrow vase, is overlain by a salt cap 1,000 feet thick. More than 2,400 feet of dirt and rock lie atop the cap. The cavern well extends through this upper layer from the surface to the cavern's top.

He said the cavern has a diameter of 150 feet at the top and 310 feet at the bottom.

While Cranch said he could not say if the cavern had collapsed — as some residents fear — DNR's Ball suggested it was not likely, given the amount of earth and salt over the top.

Nancy Malone, American Red Cross spokeswoman, said a shelter at Belle Rose Middle School remained open but no one had used it by Saturday afternoon. She said residents were staying mostly with friends and relatives.

While some residents remained in Bayou Corne and could be seen cutting grass Saturday, many others have left.

Abbie and Jason Hue and their daughter departed after a community meeting Friday when the evacuation order was given, Abbie Hue said.

Abbie Hue, 31, said her family was staying with relatives in Belle Rose, at least until school starts late next week. She said her husband has been checking on their residence.

"He just kind of goes back and forth to check it out," Abbie Hue said. "I mean it's our home, you know."

<http://theadvocate.com/home/3539214-125/sinkhole-forces-bend-gas-pipeline#comments>

BULGARIA, RAZGRAD

AUGUST 8 2012.

2 CRITICAL AFTER GAS STATION BLAST IN BULGARIA

Five people were injured when a tank loaded with fuel exploded at a gas station in the northeastern Bulgaria city of Razgrad late Monday afternoon.

Two of the injured, a driver from the city of Stara Zagora, 38, and a man from Razgrad, 48, have sustained severe burns and are listed in critical condition in the hospital of the Danube city of Ruse. Their state does not allow for them to be transported to the capital Sofia.

Three other men, of the total of seven people at the gas station at the time of the incident, have sustained

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

lighter injuries, such as light burns and a broken ankle. One of them is the manager of the station.

The call was placed on the 112 emergency hotline after 5:15 pm. People who were in the vicinity at the time say that they heard a loud bang. Nearby offices and stores were evacuated.

The fire was tamed close to midnight. A fire truck remains on the spot Tuesday still cooling down the tank.

Air probes have not revealed increased amount of harmful substances.

The station is the only one in the city providing household gas and is located in a busy district with two gasoline fuel stations, the central bus station, the local college and several large stores nearby.

The initial lead is that the explosion was sparked when gas has been loaded from the tank of a truck to the gas column at the station.

http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=142076

USA, CA, RICHMOND

AUGUST 9 2012.

QUESTIONS RAISED ABOUT CHEVRON'S HANDLING OF GAS LEAK THAT SPARKED MASSIVE BLAZE

Matthias Gafni and Denis Cuff

Federal, state and local agencies descended Wednesday on the site of Chevron's massive refinery fire, as questions deepened about whether the company could have prevented the accident by shutting down a crude unit that began leaking hours before the eruption of the blaze.

The lingering fire was finally extinguished Wednesday afternoon, but the company acknowledged that the damage is so severe the plant's ability to produce refined petroleum is limited -- a situation that is pushing up gas prices here and across the Western United States. No timetable has been set for repairs to be complete; in fact, even the investigations may not begin in earnest until Friday, after state officials declare the site safe.

At least five separate investigations, including one by the U.S. Chemical Safety Board, will target a pipe that burst after two hours of monitored leaking, sparking the fire.

"Any time you lose containment of hydrocarbons, it's a critical situation," said Jeff Clark, field representative for United Steelworkers Local 5, which represents about 600 operators and mechanics at the Richmond plant. "And obviously from our point of view, the majority of the time, shutting down the unit is the safest thing to do."

The San Ramon-based oil giant said shutting down the plant is a difficult call.

"To do an unplanned shutdown of a plant is fairly dangerous," said Mark Ayers, the refinery's chief of emergency services. "While we were looking at our options, the leak got worse and the fire broke out."

Meanwhile, Western Contra Costa residents raised a new round of questions on how to best coexist with their toxic neighbors. About 1,700 had visited county hospitals since Monday evening, said Pat Frost, director of Contra Costa's Emergency Medical Services. More than 1,000 residents filed claims against Chevron -- so many that the company's hotline was often busy.

Contra Costa had its own phone issues, as the county's hazardous materials chief said warning calls to area residents went out too slowly through the automatic phone system. Frost plans to beef up the system's capacity.

The leak

The Richmond No. 4 crude unit is the starting point of the refining process at Northern California's largest such facility, which processes up to 240,000 barrels of oil feedstock a day. In the processor, crude oil is heated to between 700 and 800 degrees, sometimes chemically treated, to create jet fuel, gasoline, diesel fuel and other byproducts.

The leak found Wednesday was in a pipe that separates the diesel-like mixture. Originally about 20 drips a minute, the leak suddenly "broke loose" as refinery employees attempted to take off the insulated aluminum shield around the pipe, said Randy Sawyer, Contra Costa County's chief environmental health and hazardous materials officer.

Crews evacuated, and the vapor caught fire so quickly that a Chevron fire truck was destroyed in the blaze.

Chevron officials pushed the notification button 10 minutes after the fire started, Sawyer said, automatically sounding sirens and alerting authorities. He said that was a reasonable response time.

The No. 4 crude unit was the site of a major 2007 Chevron fire, but Sawyer said the two incidents were in different areas.

Keeping production flowing is often a driving force in decision making at all refineries, Clark said.

"Any disruption in production affects profits," he said. "As far as the overall industry goes? Yeah, we have concerns that sometimes decisions are made to fix things without disrupting production."

Chevron representatives said Wednesday safety is top priority.

While a controlled burn smoldered Wednesday morning, a leak from a valve above the first fire dripped onto the burn and caused a small secondary fire near the upper valve, a Chevron spokesman said.

Chevron called Richmond firefighters, and they combined to extinguish the controlled burn and secondary fire.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

The company said there still was a risk a small fire could break out in the lines, so they are monitoring the site.

Environmentalists fume

Some critics said Chevron is part of an oil industry responsible for too many toxic releases, and that they happen because too much emphasis is placed on profit.

Many previous refinery accidents around the country could have been prevented if plant operators had shut down production equipment rather than continue its operation while trying to fix a problem, critics said.

"If Chevron had shut down that unit when they first discovered the leak, the fire wouldn't have happened," said Denny Larson, executive director of the Global Community Monitor, an environmental watchdog group. "By not shutting down, Chevron had effectively lost control of that equipment when the fire started."

In 1993, Larson noted, the refinery in Rodeo then operated by Unocal had a leak of a chemical called catacarb for 16 days before public and regulatory complaints spurred a shutdown. Hundreds of people sought medical treatment for the pollution.

Community alert system

What was clear during Monday's fire was the inadequate automatic phone notification system, Sawyer said.

Calls went out to 18,800 residents alerting them to shelter in place, but it took from 6:39 p.m. until 11:58 p.m. for all the calls to go out.

"We need that to be two times or three times faster," Sawyer said.

The outside company that manages the automatic calls has a limited number of lines and limited system capacity, he said. Industrial companies in the county pay for the system.

Sawyer said more sirens should have sounded, as well.

"We were most concerned about people most around the refinery," he said. "Looking in hindsight, maybe we could have sounded more alarms ... that was my decision."

Meanwhile, Chevron's 24-hour, seven-day-a-week hotline intended to compensate community members for medical and property expenses incurred from the fire had capacity issues of its own, as many callers got busy signals.

"We have heard those complaints and are in the process of adding phone lines," said Heather Kulp, a Chevron spokeswoman. The claims number is 866-260-7881.

The company also plans to open a Richmond office to allow residents to file claims in person.

http://www.contracostatimes.com/news/ci_21264773/small-fire-flares-up-at-same-site-major

USA, N.Y, GREENE CO, CAIRO

AUGUST 10 2012.

IMPROPER MARKINGS ON TANKS COST TOWN

BOARD AGREES TO PAY \$2,400 FINE FOR FUEL STORAGE INFRACTIONS

Susan Campriello

Cairo officials have agreed to pay a state-imposed fine concerning improper markings on fuel storage tanks and inadequate overflow protection.

The Town Board voted Wednesday evening to allow Town Supervisor Ted Banta to sign a consent order from the state Department of Environmental Conservation and pay an approximate \$2,400 fine for the infractions.

Last year, the state alleged that ports on two fuel storage tanks on town property were improperly color-coded; that one tank lacked proper means of preventing spills and a valve was missing on certain lines, according to official documents.

It was also alleged that the town had removed a tank without properly notifying state officials.

According to Banta, the state issued Cairo a violation notice at the end June 2011. The state claimed that Cairo had not responded, and issued the order about 10 months after the initial violation notice, according to Banta.

Banta said Cairo's highway officials immediately sent the state information and documentation needed to complete a state-issued compliance schedule.

Robert Hempstead, superintendent of the town's highway department, said Wednesday evening that the state was "beating up on" the town for what called a "clerical error."

"We thought we'd done everything we needed to do," he said.

Wednesday evening, Cairo Town Attorney Tal Rappleyea explained that, in his opinion, the state's position was that the town had completed the work but had not provided the correct paperwork.

He advised that the fines could increase if the town did not respond to the order.

According to Banta and Rappleyea, the state initially asked for a fine of about \$3,200. However, Rappleyea worked with the state to lower the final amount due.

"We were still disappointed that we were going to get fined," Banta said Thursday. "They were kind enough at

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

least to reduce the fine.”

<http://www.thedailymail.net/articles/2012/08/10/news/doc50249cf95e7d1775949943.txt>

USA, FLA, ST. AUGUSTINE

AUGUST 12 2012.

TRUCK DRIVER CHARGED IN ST. AUGUSTINE GAS STATION EXPLOSION BP WORKER FACES 1 COUNT OF MISDEMEANOR CULPABLE NEGLIGENCE

Sheldon Gardner

The State Attorney's Office has charged David Cowles with culpable negligence in the State Road 16 BP gas station explosion on Aug. 19.

Cowles was delivering thousands of gallons of fuel to the BP station for Florida Rock and Tank Lines when the explosion occurred.

The explosion severely injured Cowles, destroyed businesses and dumped thousands of gallons of fuel in the nearby marsh.

The negligence charge stems from a report by the State Fire Marshal's office that claims Cowles left a tanker unattended while it was off-loading fuel.

The charge is a second-degree misdemeanor and is punishable by a maximum of six months of probation and carries a maximum of 60 days in the county jail, according to State Attorney's Office spokeswoman Klare Ly.

Cowles, of Fort McCoy, was severely burned in the explosion at the 5th Wheel BP gas station on Masters Drive. The station is owned by Coomes Oil, a company owned by J.B. Coomes.

The burns caused permanent damage to Cowles' hands and left arm, his attorney Stuart Ratzan said. Cowles is able to move now but can't work, and he is dealing with "a lot of post-traumatic stress," said Ratzan.

In May, the State Fire Marshal's office finished its investigation into the explosion and subsequently filed a complaint affidavit with the State Attorney's Office for culpable negligence against Cowles, said State Fire Marshal's Office spokeswoman Deborah Cox.

The Fire Marshal's report came after the Occupational Safety and Health Administration cited Florida Rock and Tank Lines and Coomes Oil and Supply with failing to provide a way for delivery drivers to determine how much gas was in the above-ground tank at the gas station.

Cowles has since sued Coomes Oil, and J.B. Coomes' and his attorney have appealed the citation and filed counter-claims.

The State Attorney's Office formally charged Cowles with culpable negligence recently. He has pleaded not guilty, and is scheduled for a pretrial hearing on Sept. 4.

Ratzan said that Cowles is not to blame for the accident, and that the Fire Marshal's report did not sufficiently investigate Coomes' accounting practices.

"The charges stem from the Fire Marshal's report which is something that I think we're going to prove ... (was) insufficiently investigated and reached an irresponsible conclusion," Ratzan said on Friday.

Ratzan also said Cowles was not 59 feet away from the truck when it was off-loading fuel, as the Fire Marshal's report alleged. He also said that Coomes failed to properly figure the amount of gasoline in the tank and ordered too much for that day.

"Mr. Cowles is supposed to pump when the customer orders fuel," he said. "It's not David Cowles' job to manage the inventory."

Coomes' Attorney Michael Stevens, said that the accident would not have happened if Cowles had not walked away. He also said that fuel gauges were on the tanks and that Coomes physically checked the levels on the gasoline tanks every week.

<http://jacksonville.com/news/crime/2012-08-11/story/truck-driver-charged-st-augustine-gas-station-explosion#ixzz24x1Xidn7>

USA, CA, RICHMOND

AUGUST 12 2012.

INVESTIGATOR: CHEVRON'S RICHMOND REFINERY FIRE 'NEAR DISASTER' FOR WORKERS; PIPE SAFETY IN QUESTION

Matthias Gafni and Sean Maher

More than a dozen workers were nearly killed when the vapor cloud that sparked Monday's massive Chevron refinery fire engulfed them as they worked on a leaky, four-decades-old pipe that the oil giant had not replaced during a round of maintenance last year, federal investigators said Saturday.

The team of U.S. Chemical Safety Board investigators painted a frightening picture of the seconds after the

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

pipe released a 600-degree "gas-oil" liquid that created a highly flammable vapor cloud that quickly engulfed Chevron employees who were examining the pipe. In revealing these new details, they called it one of the worst refinery accidents in recent years and noted that it was rare for so many employees to be in harm's way.

"These workers might have been killed or severely injured had they not escaped the cloud as the release rate escalated and the cloud ignited, shortly thereafter," said team leader Dan Tillema.

Five Chevron workers had minor injuries.

"Monday's fire was a near-disaster for refinery personnel," said Dr. Rafael Moure-Eraso, the chemical board's chairperson. "The circumstances warrant a full and independent federal investigation to determine the root causes. Although fortunately no workers were killed, the overall impact of the incident ranks it as among the most serious U.S. refinery incidents in recent years."

A 12-inch pipe adjacent to the leaky pipe, which dates to the 1970s and is original to the

No. 4 crude processing unit, was reportedly replaced during maintenance last year after it was found to be corroded, but not the 8-inch one that failed just before the fire, said Dr. Daniel Horowitz, chemical board spokesman. Investigators have asked for that inspection report from last year.

"One of the key issues for us will be to understand what condition the 8-inch pipe was in during the inspection," Horowitz said.

To have left the pipe in place would mean Chevron employees believed it could last another five years before the next mandatory inspection, he said.

On Monday, workers found the old pipe leaking at 20 drips a minute and took two hours before deciding to remove the pipe's fiberglass insulation while the unit was still processing crude, causing the leak to accelerate and quickly ignite. The large fire sent black smoke billowing across the East Bay, leading to more than 5,700 residents seeking medical treatment for symptoms ranging from anxiety to respiratory distress, according to the Contra Costa health department.

Federal investigators plan to evaluate what procedures and industry practices exist when responding to a combustible material leak at a running unit. Critics have questioned why Chevron did not shut down the crude processing unit while investigating the leak. The oil company's officials have said shutting down the plant can cause other dangers and is not always the best course.

"We agree that this is a serious incident that warrants thorough investigation," Chevron spokesman Justin Higgs wrote in an e-mail Saturday. "We are cooperating with all regulatory agencies and are committed to better understanding the root cause of this incident."

Chevron employees are safe, Higgs wrote, "because of the professionalism of emergency responders and their strict adherence to emergency procedures in evacuating the area when it became clear that the situation was escalating."

Asked how old the pipe in question was, why it hadn't been replaced and what standards the refinery uses for maintaining its pipes and infrastructure, Higgs said the company is not publicly disclosing that information and that investigators have yet to see the leaky pipe's testing records. Given its age and the condition of the pipes around it, corrosion remained a possible cause for its failure, he said.

"As soon as the investigation concludes, we fully intend to make that information public," Higgs said.

The Chemical Safety Board investigators have already conducted witness interviews and reviewed documents, and plan to let their structural and industrial safety experts visit the fire site Monday once the area has been deemed safe.

They will do independent testing of the leaking section of the pipe to determine how it failed, as well as review the county's emergency notification system, which has been criticized for spotty siren sounding and tardy phone notifications.

Pipes from the 1970s and earlier remain throughout the No. 4 crude unit and the rest of the 110-year-old facility, the oldest refinery on the West Coast which began processing crude oil before Richmond became a city, said Randy Sawyer, Contra Costa Hazardous Materials Program director.

"If there was no source of corrosion, they could be there for a very long time," he said of the network of pipes.

Even if the refinery had followed a strict inspection plan in search of corrosion, pipes could still fail, said Richard Kuprewicz, a pipeline safety consultant.

"Just because a pipe is old doesn't mean you have to replace it," he said, adding that technology and equipment on units that process crude oil have not changed much since the 1970s.

Most refineries pipes are made of carbon steel, wrapped in fiberglass insulation and an aluminum shield and are inspected for thinning or fatigue through human inspection, ultrasounds, X-rays and dye testing.

Performing maintenance on a running unit is dangerous, as evidenced by the 1999 Tosco refinery accident in

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Avon, north of Concord. Workers attempted a risky operation to replace a leaky pipe around a crude-processing unit while it was still operating. Employees cut out part of the pipe, and hot petroleum spewed out and ignited, killing four workers and severely burning a fifth. Two company mergers later, Tesoro now operates the Avon refinery.

"When do you make the decision to shut down and go in when the unit is cold and you've removed the hazardous materials?" Horowitz asked rhetorically. "Or when is it OK to go into it with a running unit?"

Industry experts say leaks are common at refineries, but national regulators warn of the inherent risks.

"That's not an acceptable posture saying there will be leaks at refineries," Horowitz said. "That wouldn't be tolerated at a nuclear plant."

And local leaders are concerned as well.

Contra Costa Supervisor John Gioia, of Richmond, wants to know why Chevron did not replace the pipe in November when the unit was shut down and every pipe inspected.

"In order to prevent these type of accidents in the future we need to know why that pipe was not replaced at the last turnaround," he said. "This is what you classify as a near miss."

http://www.mercurynews.com/news/ci_21291089/investigators-raise-alarm-about-chevron-pipe-maintenance-record

VENEZUELA , AMUAY

AUGUST 29, 2012

FIRE ERUPTS AT VENEZUELA REFINERY

George Gill

Firefighters yesterday extinguished the last of three fuel storage tank fires triggered by a devastating gas leak explosion Saturday at Petroleos de Venezuela S.A.'s Amuay refinery in Venezuela. The refinery has a base oil plant with 1,250 b/d API Group I capacity.

According to an Aug. 28 Bloomberg report, a gas leak that formed a cloud at the refinery exploded at 1:10 a.m. on Aug. 25, sending a ball of flame into the air, killing 48 people, destroying a nearby National Guard post and damaging about 500 homes. An Aug. 26 New York Times report said the blast also killed five workers at a lubricant manufacturing company's plant located just outside the refinery grounds.

Rafael Ramirez, president of state-run PDVSA and Venezuela's minister of petroleum and mining, said in a statement Monday that the incident took place in the storage block on the southern end of the refinery, which is distant from its operational area.

"All operational areas are perfectly normal, but as indicated by the protocol established for these events, some plants were shut down to prevent the flow of oil to the affected area and allow firefighters to concentrate on extinguishing the fire," Ramirez said.

According to Ramirez, the fire was put out through the work of more than 200 volunteer firefighters. He stated the area would remain cordoned off as part of the cooling process where the fire occurred and that the company would subsequently begin assessing the incident.

Eulogio Del Pino, PDVSA's vice president of exploration and production and president of Venezuelan Petroleum Corp., said in a broadcast on Venezolana de Television that a committee had been appointed to determine the causes of the incident and the source of the gas leak.

Amuay is part of the Paraguana Refining Center complex, which includes PDVSA's Cardon refinery. Cardon has a large Group I base oil plant with 4,800 b/d capacity.

The Amuay refinery has about 645,000 b/d of fuel production capacity. According to Del Pino, the country's national refining system still produces about 735,000 b/d of fuel at its other plants, which is considered almost three times the national domestic consumption of Venezuela at 280,000 b/d. The nation has an inventory of 4 million barrels of gasoline.

http://www.imakenews.com/Ing/e_article002508623.cfm?x=blt6gSI,bgF87TW

USA, LA, BELLE CHASSE

AUGUST 19 2012.

EVACUATION ORDER LIFTED NEAR BELLE CHASSE CHEMICAL PLANT

A mandatory evacuation order was lifted Saturday morning for residents near the Sun Drilling Chemical plant in Belle Chasse.

The all-clear was given shortly before 10 a.m. As of 8:00 a.m. the situation had been stabilized and the immediate danger over, according to State Police, which had become the lead investigating agency.

Trooper Nick Manale, a State Police spokesman, said Saturday that the situation was a chemical release and not a fire caused by a lightning strike, as was originally believed.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

People were evacuated, Manale said, because of the possibility that a tank involved might explode and cause a more serious leak.

The chemical reaction at the plant near Main and G Streets near the Belle Chasse ferry caused the evacuation of some nearby residents and some government buildings, including the district attorney's office, the sheriff's office and the council building.

Initially, officials said a lightning strike sparked a fire in a chemical tank, releasing chemicals and prompting road closures and voluntary evacuations. Then officials called mandatory evacuations, saying the tank began to swell and they feared an explosion.

But by 10 p.m. officials said the tank wasn't swelling, and there may not have been a lightning strike or a fire. Instead they said the tank, which contains about 2000 gallons of a hazardous material called divinylbenzene, was having a chemical reaction.

And the smoke seen earlier Friday may have been the result of nitrogen firefighters used to try to cool the tank. But that hasn't worked and the tank remained volatile, with the possibility of an explosion.

Officials continue to test air quality and have found no dangers. The biggest threat now remains the volatile tank. A crew from Baton Rouge brought a chemical stabilizer, but that neutralizer could take hours to work.

"There is no catastrophic failure right now as was said earlier, but we're going to do it as a precaution, it's for public safety to keep this evacuation area clear, until we have the tank stabilized and the chemical reaction is stopped," said Sgt. Joe Piglia of Louisiana State Police.

"Whenever you talk about the possibility of an explosion, you talk in two terms, plumes which is the air and fragments which is when it explodes, the fragments run out. Whenever you set up a safe zone, you take those things into consideration," said Guy Laigast, Plaquemines Parish Emergency Management director.

Statement from Sun Drilling Products Corporation:

Sun Drilling Products Corporation ("Sun") is currently investigating an incident at its Belle Chasse plant which occurred on August 17th, 2012 at approximately 1:30 p.m.

As reported by at least one eyewitness, it is believed that the facility sustained a direct lightning strike which triggered a reaction in the facility's divinylbenzene raw material storage tank inside the facility. The reaction was contained to the raw material storage tank. That area of the manufacturing plant had been shut down at the time and no one on site was injured.

The incident is under investigation by the Company and Louisiana DEQ. SUN is cooperating with all local and state authorities to determine the full extent and impact of the event.

Sun is a closely held oilfield and specialty products company employing approximately 30 people in Belle Chasse.

<http://www.wvltv.com/news/Chemical-release-fire-in-Belle-Chasse--166568096.html>

USA, WA, BELLINGHAM

AUGUST 20 2012.

PHOTO OF B.C. MAN FILLING UP BAGS OF CHEAP AMERICAN GAS CAUSES STIR

Canadians are once again causing drama south of the border due to their love of cheaper American prices.

A photo of a man with a British Columbia licence plate stirred up controversy in Bellingham, Wash., because it appeared to show him filling up what looked like large duffel bags inside plastic garbage bags with gasoline.

The woman who took the photo told local media that the man filled three plastic-lined duffel bags at the Fred Meyer gas station in Bellingham, which is located about 50 kilometres south of the U.S.-Canada border crossing in Abbotsford B.C.

After a Seattle television station broadcast the story, online comments began pouring in.

One person wrote, "A hockey puck to the head would be the only reason for this behavior," while another commenter posted, "Stay in Canada – please."

According to WashingtonGasPrices.com, the cost of regular gas in Bellingham ranges from US\$3.92 to US\$4.29 per gallon, which is the equivalent to about US\$1.03 to US\$1.13 per litre in Canada.

While the photographs don't show the man pumping gas directly into the bags, the woman who took the photos said she saw him pump gas into the bags, seal them and put them in the back of his car, which had B.C. plates.

Police called such a move "dangerous."

"You run the risk of all sorts of potential, if there was an impact or anything like that," said Sgt. Mark Dennis of the Washington State Patrol. "And you simply wouldn't want to have loose gasoline inside of a car."

It's the second time this week that Canadians have been accused of behaving badly in Bellingham.

A video of frantic customers ransacking a pallet of milk in a Bellingham Costco quickly became a YouTube

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

sensation. It also sparked the creation of a Facebook page asking for separate shopping hours for Canadians and Americans.

The page was started by an apparently disgruntled resident of Bellingham, complaining that it had become nearly impossible to shop at a local Costco due to the high volume of Canuck bargain hunters.

An early post reads: "You all been there. its hard to find a parking spot. Them Canadians can be rude. The lines are crazy. We aren't on a vacation and have an RV to hang out in like those Canadians. We just want to go shopping, not go on an adventure (sic)."

As of Saturday the page had more than 4,770 likes.

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/photo-of-b-c-man-filling-up-bags-of-cheap-american-gas-causes-stir-1.920422#ixzz26vOoISbE>

USA, CA, RICHMOND

AUGUST 22 2012.

CHEVRON REFINERY FIRE A 'CLOSE CALL'

Jaxon Van Derbeken

The chairman of the U.S. Chemical Safety Board toured the scene of the Chevron refinery fire Monday and released photos of the gigantic vapor cloud that loomed over Richmond before it caught fire.

Calling the accident a "close call" that could have had an "extraordinarily bigger impact on the community," Rafael Moure-Eraso said he hopes the agency's investigation will offer lessons to the troubled industry.

"We have seen the refinery sector is having lot of problems," he said.

Given the magnitude of the vapor cloud, he said, the Aug. 6 accident at the Richmond refinery merited "a serious and careful look."

A series of six pictures taken from Pier 39 in San Francisco by a photographer documenting preparation for America's Cup races showed the rapidly expanding white plume, which suddenly turned partly black. Safety board officials said the exact size and contents of the cloud are still being assessed but the cloud ballooned some 1,000 feet into the air before it ignited and triggered a fire at the plant.

The fire spewed black smoke across Richmond and nearby East Bay communities, sending 11,000 people to clinics and hospitals seeking treatment.

Before the fire, a pipe leading from a unit that processed oil into hydrocarbon products leaked for about two hours while crews studied the situation and removed insulation from around the line. Suddenly, a vapor plume swelled around the crew and an idling fire truck, forcing more than 20 workers to flee for their lives.

It took two minutes for the dense cloud to ignite, board officials said.

Moure-Eraso said he was concerned that the operators did not replace the 8-inch diameter pipe when the plant was shut down for maintenance last November, even though corrosion was found in an adjacent 12-inch line, which carried the same diesel-grade material. The 12-inch line was replaced.

Last week, the federal agency reached an agreement with state occupational safety investigators to preserve evidence as the investigation proceeds. Moure-Eraso said he was eager to get beyond criticism by Cal/OSHA investigators in social media that accused the safety board of "grandstanding."

"We feel like that was the past, that was a mistake," he said and that the safety board had accepted Cal/OSHA's apology.

He said his agency's goal is to get as much information to the public as possible, as compared with the regulatory agencies charged with deciding whether to charge Chevron with safety violations.

Don Holmstrom, who is managing the investigation for the board, said he was concerned that more than 20 workers were near the leak when the cloud formed. Some escaped just 20 seconds before the fire erupted, he said.

"When you have a leak, you want to have control of the area," he said. "We are examining the issue of the number of people and why they were there."

<http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Chevron-refinery-fire-a-close-call-3802470.php#ixzz26vROU1Vz>

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

VENEZUELA, AMUAY

AUGUST 25 2012.

EXPLOSION AT VENEZUELA REFINERY KILLS 7, INJURES 48

Kejal Vyas

A gas leak caused a major explosion at Venezuela's Amuay refinery, the oil-rich country's largest facility, leaving 39 people dead early Saturday in the worst accident to hit the OPEC nation in years.

The death toll rose steadily throughout the day from initial government estimates given at dawn, and more than 80 people were taken to hospitals after the blast at the 640,000 barrel-a-day refinery, state and local union officials said.

The accident is likely to become a thorn in the side of President Hugo Chavez as he seeks re-election on Oct. 7. After 13 years at the helm, the populist leader is facing his toughest electoral opponent--a young former state governor, Henrique Capriles. At least one prominent pollster has shown the two in a close race.

Critics charge that a rising number of accidents at oil facilities is the result of insufficient investments in industry maintenance by the Chavez administration. State energy monopoly Petroleos de Venezuela, or PdVSA, diverts large portions of revenue to finance social programs that have become iconic under Mr. Chavez's leadership and the company has previously admitted to having delayed maintenance efforts at several large refining plants last year.

"This is the biggest disaster in recent memory," said Eddie Ramirez, national coordinator of Gente de Petroleo, an industry advocacy group that has been critical of the government's management of PdVSA. "The unfortunate event could have been a lot worse had it happened during the day" as more workers would have been present, Mr. Ramirez added.

Vice President Elias Jaua, in a televised press conference Saturday night, said 18 of those killed were members of the National Guard stationed near the refinery, 15 were civilians and six bodies remained unidentified. Buildings and houses around the plant were destroyed by the explosion, authorities said.

Speaking on state television network VTV, Oil Minister Rafael Ramirez acknowledged "severe damage" to the Amuay refinery and the surrounding area, including a post used by the National Guard. Large amounts of black smoke could be seen billowing from the plant as the minister and other top officials addressed the nation on television from outside the site.

Jesus Luongo, a PdVSA director in charge of refining operations, rejected that inadequate maintenance was the reason for Saturday's blast. "We have a rigorous maintenance program," Mr. Luongo said. He added that PdVSA has spent north of \$6 billion in maintenance of refineries over the last three years.

The explosion, which one union official said may have started in the propane and butane gas unit of the refinery, forced the shutdown of Amuay. The facility is slated to be reopened in two days.

"There was a big explosion at 1:05 a.m. [local time] that people thought was a tremor, an earthquake," said Stella Lugo, the local state governor. She called on residents to remain calm, adding that the situation was under control and "we have evacuated all the areas that need to be evacuated."

Fire is seen after the explosion at Amuay oil refinery.

Officials said there was no immediate threat of another explosion at the site and that a fire that resulted from the initial blast had been contained.

In recent years, Amuay, along with other major refineries in Venezuela, have experienced chronic mishaps and operational delays, which, some analysts say, will weigh on the government's ambitious plans to sharply increase oil output in coming years.

The oil minister said he had ordered an investigation into the explosion. He noted that nine crude-oil-storage tanks had been destroyed in the incident but added that domestic fuel supplies wouldn't be disrupted.

"It's a very serious situation...this never happened before at our refinery," said Ivan Freites, a local leader of the oil workers union.

Problems with Venezuela's power grid and oil industry have become common in recent years. While detractors from the government often attribute the resource-rich country's woes to negligence and underinvestment, supporters of the president have many times pointed the finger at saboteurs looking to destabilize Mr. Chavez's administration.

On Saturday, Miguel Perez Pirela, a prominent television show host on VTV raised the possibility of parties opposed to the government being responsible for the Amuay disaster. "You can't throw out sabotage in Amuay," he said through the social media network Twitter.

Amuay is part of Venezuela's Paraguana Refining Complex, located in the northwestern state of Falcon, around 330 miles from Caracas. PdVSA announced in April it had concluded maintenance efforts at Amuay's catalytic cracker unit, which was supposed to allow for "reliable operations for the next four years."

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

In an annual report submitted to the National Assembly in March, PdVSA said a series of refinery-upkeep efforts last year were delayed until 2012 due to what it called the "low availability of materials." Amuay was among the facilities that had maintenance delayed.

In 1993, an explosion at a gas plant in Lake Maracaibo killed 13 workers.

In 2010, the Aban Pearl, an offshore rig operated by PdVSA, sank in the Caribbean Sea but all workers at the site were rescued.

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444812704577610813650522158.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

UPDATE 3:VENEZUELA, PUNTO FIJO

AUGUST 26 2012.

REFINERY BLAST KILLS 39 IN VENEZUELA, DOZENS HURT

Jorge Rueda reported from Punto Fijo and Ian James from Caracas

After nightfall on Friday, as red lights began glowing atop the massive Amuay refinery in western Venezuela, the odor of sulfur made its way through the surrounding neighborhood of working-class homes and small shops.

Francisco Gonzalez, a stocky accountant with dark hair, noticed the smell after 7 p.m. as he climbed the stairs to his second-story apartment across the street from the refinery. He had smelled the fumes from gas leaks many times before, so he didn't think much about it as he shut the door.

Six hours later, disaster struck. A powerful explosion ripped through the neighborhood and engulfed part of the refinery in flames, killing at least 39 people and injuring more than 80 in Venezuela's deadliest refinery blast ever.

"The first thing I saw was that the apartment didn't have windows or doors or walls, just a floor and a roof," Gonzalez said. "I don't know how we survived."

In the dark, the 31-year-old man made his way downstairs to the street, where he, his brother and sister-in-law joined terrified neighbors. Some were wounded. Others were shouting.

When Gonzalez looked at the back of his right hand, it was bleeding from gashes.

At about 2 a.m., the halls of the hospital were filling up with wounded people. Doctors and nurses hurried to treat the most seriously hurt, while Gonzalez and others sat on the floor waiting their turn.

Back at the refinery, soldiers, firefighters and state oil company workers were diving into action. Bodies were pulled from the rubble and lifted onto pickup trucks.

Stella Lugo, the governor of Falcon state, went on state television to update the nation, setting the initial toll at seven people dead and 48 injured. The toll steadily rose in the next hours.

When she reached the refinery at dawn, Lugo posted a photo on Twitter showing balls of fire and black smoke billowing.

Other government officials went on television saying the gas leak had led to the blast and that the fire was being brought under control. President Hugo Chavez ordered an investigation and declared three days of mourning in the country.

A total of 209 homes and 11 businesses were damaged in the explosion, and a National Guard post next to the refinery was destroyed, Vice President Elias Jaua said on Saturday. He said 18 of the victims were National Guard soldiers.

On Saturday night, dozens of people who had fled their homes in the neighborhood of La Pastora returned to streets covered with rubble, twisted scraps of metal and puddles of spilled fuel.

Gabriela Nunez, a housewife, went back to her home to gather belongings, saying she was worried about looters who had stolen goods from nearby stores hours after the explosion.

"That forced us to come back, even though we're afraid, to save what can be saved and secure our houses," Nunez said.

More than a day after the blast, the flames were still raging on Sunday, sending up a column of dark smoke.

Some oil experts and government critics were also raising questions, saying they believe there hasn't been sufficient maintenance at refineries and that the situation could be making such incidents more likely.

Refinery manager Jesus Luongo denied that, as did Chavez, who spoke to journalists near the refinery on Sunday.

The president said investigators haven't determined what caused the disaster.

"Lack of maintenance? Who can, who can say that right now with any seriousness? Nobody," Chavez said. He said he had spoken personally with some of the military officers who were on duty at the time.

"They tell me that very night, in the rounds that were made a few hours earlier, no substantial leak was detected," said Chavez, who later visited the refinery complex and attended a Mass for the victims.

Amuay is among the world's largest refineries and is part of the Paraguana Refinery Complex, which also

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

includes the adjacent Cardon refinery. Together, the refineries process about 900,000 barrels of crude per day and 200,000 barrels of gasoline.

Oil Minister Rafael Ramirez said the country has enough fuel in storage, "10 days of inventories," to keep the Venezuelan market fully supplied. He said fires were still burning in two fuel storage tanks but that other "process areas" of the refinery were otherwise unaffected.

Once the flames are completely extinguished, Ramirez said, "we have the ability to restart our refinery in two days."

Restarting will be a challenge for Gonzalez, who picked through what remained of his family's apartment, sweeping away debris with a broom. Broken glass littered the floor along with fragments of the shattered walls.

The shop on the first floor was also destroyed, but Gonzalez and his brother and sister-in-law all survived with only minor injuries.

"I'm happy to be here telling this story," Gonzalez said, his hand covered in a bandage and with stitches on his arms. "Material things, although they cost us a great deal to obtain, aren't worth much when you compare them with life."

<http://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2012/08/26/official-refinery-blast-kills-7-in-venezuela>

VENEZUELA, PUNTO FIJO

AUGUST 29 2012.

FIRE DOUSED AT VENEZUELA REFINERY HIT BY EXPLOSION

Jorge Rueda

Venezuela's biggest oil refinery remained shut down Tuesday after firefighters extinguished a blaze that raged for more than three days following an explosion that killed at least 41 people.

While fuel tanks smoldered at the Amuay refinery, Oil Minister Rafael Ramirez said officials expected to restart operations at the refinery in two days.

The blast early Saturday was the deadliest disaster ever at a Venezuelan refinery and has thrown open a national debate about safety and maintenance within the country's oil industry. The debate has also touched the presidential campaign, with President Hugo Chavez's rival calling for a transparent and thorough investigation.

The fire took longer to put out than officials had initially hoped. Ramirez had said Saturday that the state oil company would be able to restart the refinery "in a maximum of two days," then later said it would be two days once the fire was out.

"Now of course come all of the subsequent tasks: evaluation, securing the entire area," Ramirez told the Caracas-based television network Telesur on Tuesday morning. He said firefighters were still working in the area spraying the tanks with foam to cool them down.

"We need to check all the lines, all the connections, all the valves," Ramirez said. He added that the disaster hadn't affected the refinery complex's productive capacity, although operations were halted while the fires burned.

Officials said the explosion killed at least 41 people, including at least 20 National Guard soldiers stationed next to the refinery, and injured more than 150.

Government officials had said on Monday that the fire was under control but then announced that a third tank had begun burning. Residents said the flames finally began to diminish several hours before dawn on Tuesday.

Criticisms of the government's response came from some of the refinery's neighbors as well as oil experts.

Officials have said a gas leak led to the blast, but investigators have yet to determine the precise causes.

Investigators entered damaged areas to gather clues, Ramirez said. He declined to discuss details of the probe but said officials had followed safety protocols once they detected the gas leak in an area of fuel storage tanks shortly before the blast.

Another state oil company official told Chavez during a televised conversation Sunday that at about midnight officials had detected the leak and "went out to the street to block traffic."

Residents said they had no official warning before the explosion hit at about 1 a.m. Saturday. The blast knocked down walls, shattered windows and left streets littered with rubble.

On Tuesday, residents said they were relieved the fire was out.

Edgar Medina was working with his father to clear rubble that blocked the way to what remained of their windowless home. "Now what we hope is that they help us rebuild everything."

Chavez, who visited injured victims in a hospital Monday, announced the creation of a 100 million bolivar (\$23 million) fund to help rebuild. He said more than 500 homes were damaged.

On Tuesday, Chavez spoke at a televised Cabinet meeting and praised state oil company officials and firefighters for their handling of the disaster. He paused for a live appearance by Gov. Stella Lugo in Falcon state, where

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

the refinery is located, as she presented homes to families at a new government housing project.

The disaster occurred little more than a month before Venezuela's Oct. 7 presidential election. Opposition candidate Henrique Capriles said Monday that the tragedy shouldn't be politicized, but he also strongly criticized a remark by Chavez, who said that "the show should continue, with our pain, with our sorrow, with our victims."

"It seems irresponsible, insensitive ... to say 'the show should continue,'" Capriles told reporters. He repeated past criticisms about the number of accidents at the state-owned oil company and said the government "has to give answers."

The refinery is among the world's largest and is part of the Paraguana Refining Center, which also includes the adjacent Cardon refinery.

More debate about the government's response is likely during the presidential campaign.

Some Chavez critics and oil industry experts say insufficient maintenance could have made such a disaster likelier. Chavez and other government officials deny that, saying billions of dollars have been spent in recent years on upkeep at refineries including Amuay.

Chavez's government has been hit recently by other infrastructure-related problems including a prison riot that killed 25 last week, the collapse of a major highway bridge and power outages in parts of the country.

Pollster Saul Cabrera's said he doesn't think the refinery disaster is likely to cause significant political damage for Chavez nor shifts in most Venezuelans' views about the government.

Cabrera said that like in the case of the collapsed bridge, the apparent problem behind the refinery explosion "is government inefficiency, but it seems that doesn't matter much to people."

"It doesn't affect (Chavez) among his voters, which are nearly half the country," Cabrera said.

Still, Cabrera predicted the vote will result in a very tight race and predicted those who are undecided "are going to end up deciding the election."

His polling firm, Consultores 21, found in a survey earlier this month that the two candidates were nearly even, with Capriles at nearly 48 percent and Chavez garnering about 46 percent. The poll consulted 1,000 people and had an error margin of about 3 percentage points.

Other polls have given a significant lead to Chavez. The Venezuelan polling firm Datanalisis found Chavez with a 15-point lead in one June poll, but also said 23 percent of those surveyed were undecided or didn't reveal a preference.

The refinery fire appeared to contribute to fluctuations in U.S. gasoline futures, though Hurricane Isaac's approach toward the U.S. Gulf Coast appeared to have a bigger effect.

Gasoline futures rose 7.7 cents, or 2.5 percent, to \$3.155 on Monday in New York, on concerns about supply disruptions from the storm and, to a degree, the closed Venezuelan refinery. On Tuesday, U.S. gasoline futures fell 2.87 cents to \$3.126 as traders waited to see how big an impact Isaac has on U.S. refineries, and as Venezuelan officials said the Amuay refinery would restart in two days.

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/08/29/fire-doused-venezuela-refinery-hit-explosion.html>

AUSTRALIA, QUEENSLAND, MORANBAH

AUGUST 30 2012. EXPLOSION CLAIMS LIFE OF FATHER

WELDING IN AN OUTSIDE WORK AREA AROUND GAS BOTTLES AND DIESEL FUEL

Janessa Ekert

A small group of workers gathered in front of a Moranbah industrial site Tuesday morning, where, just hours earlier, an explosion claimed the life of a young father.

Pale and visibly shaken, the men shared a few consoling hugs between them.

The incident occurred just before 7am. Police, paramedic and fire crews rushed to the scene - Tri Q Moranbah, a not-for-profit mining support service organisation on Goonyella Rd, between the Moranbah Recycle Shop and Moranbah Motorcycle Riders Club.

The 22-year-old was the proud father of a newborn boy, just two weeks old.

A family member described him as a "great guy" who would be "sadly missed".

A Caboolture man, he had recently moved to Moranbah to work at Tri Q.

He was not a full-time resident of the region.

Tuesday was his second day on the job, Tri Q Group chairman Greg Thomsen said.

He was killed instantly as a result of the explosion.

It was believed he was welding in an outside work area around gas bottles and diesel fuel prior to the explosion, a police spokesman said.

No one else was injured and very little structural damage was done.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

However, the exact cause of the explosion was not known late Tuesday.

The incident is being investigated by Moranbah police and Workplace Health and Safety inspectors.

Mr Thomsen, who visited the site, said counselling had been arranged for the eight staff members who had been there when the explosion occurred.

"It was quite distressing to the staff who were onsite this (Tuesday) morning," he said.

Police will compile a report for the coroner.

A Workplace Health and Safety spokesman confirmed the incident was being investigated.

<http://www.dailymercury.com.au/story/2012/03/13/man-killed-in-moranbah-explosion/>

CUBA, SANTIAGO

AUGUST 30 2012.

GAS STATION BLAST INJURES 31 IN CUBA; 5 SERIOUS

Cuban state media say an explosion at a gas station in the eastern city of Santiago has injured 31 people, five seriously. The Sierra Maestra newspaper says on its website that the blast happened Tuesday evening when the driver of a government-operated truck struck a gas tank, which tipped over and spilled its contents. As firefighters tried to contain the flammable liquid, a spark that originated from among a group of people set off the blast and a "fire of great proportions." The victims were taken to a burn unit at a nearby hospital. Five were reported in "very grave" condition. The blaze destroyed the gas station before being put out. Sierra Maestra said today that authorities were investigating.

<http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/latestnews/Gas-station-blast-injures-31-in-Cuba--5-serious>

AUSTRALIA, KALEEN

SEPTEMBER 11, 2012

WORKER BURNT AT KALEEN FUEL STATION

A man is in hospital with serious burns after a workplace accident at a fuel station in Canberra's north.

The man, aged in his 40s, was carrying out contract work at the Caltex service station on Maribyrnong Avenue at Kaleen.

He was carrying out repair work underground when a fibreglass fuel tank caught fire about 12:30pm AEST.

The man has been taken to the Canberra Hospital with serious burns to his arms and legs, and possible airway burns.

He is in a serious but stable condition.

ACT Work Safety commissioner Mark McCabe says an investigator is at the scene.

"Our investigator will be attempting to ascertain how this accident happened? Could it have been avoided?" he said.

"What should be done to ensure that we don't have an accident like that again in the future?"

The service station has reopened.

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/latest/a/-/article/14820417/man-burnt-at-kaleen-petrol-station/>

OHIO, HARRISON COUNTY

SEPTEMBER 7, 2012

WORKER SEVERELY BURNED IN FIRE AT HARRISON CO. GAS WELL SITE

A worker was critically wounded with severe burns after a fire broke out at a Harrison County gas well site Friday.

Two gas tanks and one vehicle caught fire at the Chesapeake Energy site on Henderson Road near Scio around 2 a.m.

Sheriff Ron Myers said the victim suffered third-degree burns to his hands and first-degree burns to his face.

Myers said workers were transferring water from one tank to another using a gasoline-powered pump. He said the incident is believed to be an accident and said something in the pump malfunctioned, causing it to throw a spark and start the fire.

The victim is believed to be from Montana and was airlifted to a hospital in Akron, the sheriff said.

"He's in stable but critical condition let's say until they assess his burns. They've probably done that already. We notified his wife this morning," Myers said.

Several fire departments around Harrison County were called to help fight the blaze and Henderson Road was closed for some time. Crews were able to put out the fire by 4:30 a.m. by using a foam substance.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

A statement from Keith Fuller, Chesapeake Energy Corp. Senior Director of Corporate Development read:

“At approximately 2:00 a.m. on Friday, September 7, 2012, a fire occurred in a temporary storage tank at the Stuart Henderson well site off of Henderson Road (Township Road 225) in Scio. One contractor was injured during the incident and airlifted to Akron Children’s Hospital for burns on his hands. There is no further word on his condition at this time.

Our gratitude and appreciation goes out to all of the responding fire personnel from Bowerston, Scio, Deersville, Tappan, Perrysville and Loudon Township as well as the responding unit from Harrison County Hospital. The fire was contained on the pad site. We also appreciate the efforts of the Harrison County Sheriff’s Office, including Sheriff Ronald J. Myers who personally responded to the scene. The incident is under investigation.”

<http://www.wtov9.com/news/news/fire-reported-well-site-one-injured/nR5MS/>

USA, ND, WILLISTON

SEPTEMBER 15, 2012

MAN DIES AFTER EXPLOSION

The 29-year-old Nephi, Utah man burned in an explosion at an oil rig site in early September died of his injuries Friday, a Mountrail County Sheriff’s Office press release said.

Frontier Drilling worker Jeffrey Todd Kinkaid was transferring drilling fluid out of a 400-barrel tank at the time of the fire, Frontier Safety Director James Lynch said. He was burned over 90 percent of his body at the site 12 miles southwest of Stanley and transferred to Ramey Burn Center in St. Paul, Minn. by a North Star Life Flight, the release said.

Kinkaid had worked on the rig since January at different locations and was a derrickman who was not on the rig at the time but working at the 400-barrel tank that exploded, Lynch said. He said the incident is still under investigation.

“It’s a tragic accident, and we are exploring all avenues possible as to why it happened,” he said.

Lynch said the process at the tank was fairly routine, and OSHA is involved in the ongoing investigation.

“Our deepest sympathies go out to the family,” he added.

Frontier’s rig was on the location of a Slawson Companies’ site. Slawson General Counsel Stuart Kowalski said Kinkaid had a fiance and the company deeply regrets the incident.

“Our hearts go out to his family,” he said.

Kowalski said the company and contractors strive to be vigilant about safety.

“This is a dangerous business and safety is always number one. It’s got to be,” he said.

Kowalski said Kinkaid was opening the lid of the tank at the time of the explosion.

“You wish you could turn the clock back and have them inspect that tank differently,” he said. “We just feel terrible. For a young man to lose his life is just horrible.”

http://www.willistonherald.com/news/man-dies-after-explosion/article_379a5c82-ff8a-11e1-99b2-0019bb2963f4.html

USA, MO, HAMILTON

SEPTEMBER 14, 2012

CORVALLIS MAN DIES IN APPARENT ACCIDENT AT ASPHALT PLANT

A Corvallis man died Thursday night while trying to take measurements of an oil tank at the MR Asphalt Plant north of Hamilton.

The apparent accident happened early Thursday evening when William Irby Jr., 54, was measuring the tank, which was situated about 15 feet off the ground, said Ravalli County Sheriff Chris Hoffman.

Preliminary reports indicate that Irby died when he slipped off the tank and hit his head on the concrete pad that supported the tank, Hoffman said.

The circumstances of the accident are still under investigation.

http://missoulian.com/news/state-and-regional/corvallis-man-dies-in-apparent-accident-at-asphalt-plant/article_af327eca-fec0-11e1-9e71-001a4bcf887a.html

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

USA, FLA, ST. AUGUSTINE

SEPTEMBER 6 2012.

GAS EXPLOSION SUSPECT FACING CHARGES

The driver of a fuel tank that sparked a massive explosion at a St. Augustine gas station is facing criminal charges.

David Cowles suffered severe burns when he was off-loading fuel at the station on State Road 16 last August, when the tank overflowed and sparked a fire that set off a series of explosions.

An investigation by the State Fire Marshal determined Cowles was responsible for the accident, because he stepped away from the tank during the refueling process. He was cited for culpable negligence.

Cowles attorney told Action News his client only stepped away after the refueling.

But the State Attorney's office disagreed, and in July they charged Cowles with criminal culpable negligence. It's a second degree misdemeanor that carries a minimum of 6 months probation and 60 days in jail. Cowles is scheduled to appear before a St. Johns County judge on Friday.

<http://www.actionnewsjax.com/content/topstories/story/bp-gas-station-explosion/DQQI2jrt8kmrl3oOP6CVIA.csp>

USA, LA, NEW ORLEANS

SEPTEMBER 7 2012.

OIL, CHEMICAL, COAL RELEASES DURING HURRICANE ISAAC SHOULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED, ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS SAY

Mark Schleifstein

At least 93 pollution incidents related to Hurricane Isaac should have been prevented by proper precautions by oil and gas, chemical and coal-handling facilities, representatives of three environmental groups said Thursday.

"It's completely shameful and irresponsible and inexcusable that seven years after Katrina and Rita, the lessons of those storms, the lessons we were taught by the BP oil disaster, that we have industry's continued business-as-usual approach to showcase the fact that their inaction and their ill preparedness has proven to be dangerous and deadly and unacceptable to the health of our communities, our families and our workers," said Jill Mastrototero, Gulf Coast Campaign director for the Sierra Club.

"The 93 industry accidents that have been reported to the Coast Guard's National Response Center demonstrates that we have lax enforcement by regulators and self-regulation by industries just doesn't work," she said. "Industries need to make real investments in equipment, in planning, in training their workers to prevent and respond to future actions."

A state Department of Environmental Quality statement released Thursday afternoon said many of the reports to the response center involved small spills "like transformer oil, sheens or orphaned containers."

But the agency statement said all reports would be addressed.

"DEQ is currently working with state, local and federal officials on post storm assessments," the statement said. "In most of the cases, cleanup has begun and in many it is already finished. There are only a few larger spills, and cleanup has begun on those as well."

"The impact to human health and the environment has been minimal, especially considering the size and duration of the storm," the statement said.

The incidents through Tuesday, most of which were reported by the companies themselves, included:

Leaking oil from wellheads or platforms, including the failure of one or more storage tanks, with the oil going into the water along the east or west banks of the Mississippi River in Plaquemines or St. Bernard parishes.

The release of 277 tons of sulfur dioxide, 1,200 pounds of hydrogen sulfide and 100 pounds of benzene at Chalmette Refining in St. Bernard.

The release of an unknown amount of butadiene, benzene, carbon dioxide, ethylene, hexane, ethane and propylene at the Shell Chemical/Motiva campus in St. Charles Parish. The emissions occurred when the facility's operators could not keep an emergency flare lit, according to response center reports.

The displacement by storm surge of coal and coal dust from storage piles at the Kinder Morgan Industrial Marine Transport Terminal near Myrtle Grove in Plaquemines Parish over containment berms and into nearby wetlands. The terminal stores coal for export to other countries.

One report to the response center from an unidentified caller reported that 400 barrels of crude oil and 400 barrels of produce water may have been released from fiberglass tanks at a Texas Petroleum well between Buras and Boothville in wetlands along the west bank of the Mississippi.

In most cases, the releases were reported by the industries themselves just before, during or immediately after Isaac passed over southeastern Louisiana on Wednesday. Some were reported anonymously by local residents, or

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

by representatives of the environmental groups who flew over much of Plaquemines Parish and photographed several of the oil spills and coal storage area washouts on Sunday.

A spokesman for Phillips 66 said its Alliance Refinery followed its shut-down procedures in advance of Isaac, but that flooding inundated roadways and collection systems within its site. Culverts were sealed off to contain any oily water on refinery property, and the company is now cleaning up any remaining sheen found on vegetation and soil on the site.

A light sheen also was found on the river near a refinery outfall on Thursday, Aug. 30, and the area was boomed. No sheen has been seen since then, the spokesman said. Both issues were reported by the company to the response center.

Federal and state officials should create a regional citizens advisory council that can play a role in responding to similar incidents in the future, said Aaron Viles, deputy director of the Gulf Restoration Network. Establishment of such a panel has been recommended by several federally-sponsored panels investigating the BP oil spill.

He said the overflow of coal into nearby wetlands and water courses at storage facilities operated by Kinder Morgan and a second company in Plaquemines should be a warning against approving development of a third coal export facility near Myrtle Grove by RAM Terminals LLC.

"It's a horrible idea to put such an inherently dirty facility at a place where the state plans to build a freshwater and sediment diversion to build wetlands," Viles said.

Anne Rolfes, director of the Louisiana Bucket Brigade, which has lobbied refineries for several years to adopt better methods of avoiding damage, and thus chemical releases, during storms and hurricanes, said many of the industries that experienced accidents during Isaac are required by federal law to adopt a "risk management plan" aimed at reducing just such accidents.

She charged that Chalmette Refining and other facilities waited too long to shut down operations and prepare for hurricane winds and storms in an attempt to maximize profits at the expense of safety, and said many have a record of similar failures to prepare during past storms, including Katrina in 2005 and Gustav in 2008.

Rolfes called on the federal Environmental Protection Agency and the state Department of Environmental Quality to conduct investigations to determine whether the industries with accidents had followed those plans to reduce accident risk in advance of Isaac. Neither agency immediately responded to a request for comment Thursday afternoon.

All three environmental groups called on the companies responsible for the pollution releases to clean them up, improve their preparedness plans, and hire more workers to oversee safety and maintenance. They also called on EPA and DEQ to require companies found in violation of federal laws as a result of the accidents to pay monetary fines.

According to the DEQ statement, the agency will continue to work with industry officials to minimize releases in emergency events and during normal operations.

"Anyone who violates environmental regulations, such as exceeding permit limits or failures to notify, will be subject to penalties," the statement said. "We are still conducting assessments in the impacted areas."

http://www.nola.com/hurricane/index.ssf/2012/09/oil_chemical_coal_releases_dur.html

USA, UT, SALT LAKE CITY

SEPTEMBER 9 2012.

SAFETY RECORDS SHOW HUNDREDS OF VIOLATIONS AT UTAH REFINERIES

OIL » ON AVERAGE, A SAFETY VIOLATION OCCURS EVERY 9 DAYS AT THE 5 FACILITIES BORDERING S.L., DAVIS COUNTIES.

Tony Semerad

Scores of southern Davis County residents no doubt were surprised the morning of Sept. 1 to find spatters of thick, sticky oil on their homes, cars, lawns and gardens after a storage tank blew at a nearby refinery.

Maybe they shouldn't have been. Records show that a leak, spill, fire, blast or air-pollution violation occurs, on average, every nine days at the five refineries bordering Salt Lake and Davis counties — though most of those incidents aren't so vast, visible or menacing.

The tank explosion, according to state records, was one of more than 150 environmental incidents at the Wood Cross refinery since mid-2003, when HollyFrontier took it over from Phillips 66. The plant accounted for nearly 40 percent of the 519 environmental incidents linked to the five Utah refineries since 2000.

Reports to the state Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) reveal refinery incidents vary widely in severity, ranging from hundreds of short-lived releases of unauthorized pollution from smokestacks to at least four other major explosions, including two in 2009 at the Silver Eagle refinery, which injured workers and damaged nearby homes.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Based on DEQ records dating to 1990, by far the most frequent event involved equipment failures leading to sulfur-based compounds — usually toxic sulfur dioxide, stinky hydrogen sulfide or corrosive sulfuric acid — being released through refinery stacks or spilled onto the ground. In hundreds of cases during that 22-year period, records show, such releases stemmed from malfunctions in the plants' sulfur-recovery units or from power outages.

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Reports indicate fires broke out in at least 17 incidents between 1992 and 2009. And at least 89 refinery accidents since 2000 led to spills or leaks, according to DEQ records.

Gasoline, diesel, refining sludge, jet fuel, wastewater and refining chemicals were the most common substances spilled, though refinery officials note that all but a few of the spills were contained within plant perimeters. Spill accidents often were attributed to faulty pipes or tanks or to mishaps during the transfer of volatile liquids from transport trucks.

Taken together, the safety record is putting additional scrutiny on recent proposals from three of the refineries to expand or upgrade their operations in hopes of capturing a share of an oil boom under way in eastern Utah and meeting demand for refining a new distinctive crude oil known as black wax.

"No time is a good time to have a safety incident like this at one of Utah's refineries," said Lee Peacock, president of the Utah Petroleum Association. "Holly is going to do everything in its power to make sure it doesn't happen again."

Peacock and company officials insist they maintain robust risk-monitoring and accident-prevention programs, giving them strong and, in some cases, award-winning safety records in light of the heavy industrial nature of what they do.

Yet accident records and other evidence underscore the risks inherent to urban centers located in proximity to these refineries, some of which began operating more than 100 years ago, well in advance of the residential presence that now surrounds their borders.

"I just don't think that refineries and densely populated areas are compatible," said Linda Johnson, who monitors environmental issues for the Utah League of Women Voters.

Brian Moench is an anesthesiologist and co-founder of Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment, a group focused on potential health impacts of the refineries' air emissions and chemical stockpiles. Active at a series of public hearings on the proposed refinery expansions, the group is considering legal action to stop the projects.

Of particular concern, Moench said, are reserves of hydrofluoric acid kept at three of the refineries. By the oil processors' own estimates, he notes, an explosive release of the inorganic acid could threaten hundreds of thousands of Wasatch Front residents.

"I just don't see how it can be considered an acceptable risk to the community for them to continue to use it," Moench said. "It just seems to be a head-in-the-sand approach."

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DEQ has records on at least four other refinery explosions: at the Chevron facility in Salt Lake City in 1992; at Flying J in North Salt Lake, now run by Big West Oil, in 1994; and two blasts in 2009 at Silver Eagle in Woods Cross.

In January 2009, a fuel tank at Silver Eagle blew up, sending four workers to the hospital with severe burns and forcing evacuation of nearby homes. Firefighters narrowly prevented the blaze from spreading to other fuel tanks nearby.

The second explosion, in November, grew from a faulty hydrogen and diesel fuel line, shooting flames into the air and shock waves as far away as Farmington and Layton.

Although nobody was injured, the blast damaged about a dozen homes severely and at least 300 residents filed claims against the company. One Woods Cross couple won a \$325,000 jury award for economic and emotional damages.

Whatever its cause, the recent Holly tank eruption spewed oil as far as a mile, across portions of Woods Cross, Bountiful and West Bountiful. The refinery mounted a swift response, according to neighbors and state officials, and crews will be pressure-washing homes and repairing lawns for several weeks.

The tank held a thick fuel oil otherwise solid at room temperature. The 1.2 million-gallon tank and others like it at the refinery are fitted with steam-heated coils to liquefy the contents by keeping them between 200 and 300 degrees, said Holly Environmental Manager Mike Astin.

Officials are exploring the possibility that water seeped into the tank and vaporized, elevating the pressure inside and eventually bursting a seam around the roof while sending more than 8,000 gallons of oil skyward.

The steam coils are one possible source of the water, Astin said, but it "could have come from a number of other sources."

Holly and state regulators say it will take weeks to fully investigate the incident, the fourth that the refinery has

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

reported this year. The previous three involved equipment failures in the venting of air-borne pollutants.

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The tank explosion also came amid fresh memories of the June 2010 Chevron pipeline leak that scarred Red Butte Creek, Liberty Park's pond and parts of the Jordan River. That spill, along with another from the same pipeline six months later, appears to have heightened the sensitivity of regulators and public officials to the importance of an effective response.

"We learned from that to assess the impact quickly, take care of the problem and affix blame at a later appropriate time," said Bryce Bird, director of the state Division of Air Quality, which is investigating the Wood Cross refinery incident and has a say in the proposed refinery expansions.

The Holly, Chevron and Tesoro refineries all plan major capacity upgrades to accommodate the record amounts of black- and yellow-wax crude reserves coming from Utah's Uinta Basin. The three hope to invest as much as \$488 million to pump up daily capacity by more than 34,000 barrels and add hundreds of well-paying jobs.

Akin to petroleum jelly, these new reserves of waxy crude also solidify unless kept warm, requiring heat for extraction and storage. The product also must be shipped in insulated oil tankers, mostly along U.S. Highway 40, to the Salt Lake Valley.

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While state officials are reviewing project applications from Holly and Tesoro, their jurisdiction is limited to seeing whether new equipment complies with air-emission standards for federally regulated pollutants such as sulfur dioxide, nitrous oxide and particulate matter. From an air-quality perspective, regulators believe the proposed shift to refining low-sulfur black wax will lower polluting emissions while also bringing new and more efficient refining technology online.

But as for a safety review of refinery construction plans, Bird said, "It's not us."

Industry safety is a perennial concern, locally and nationally.

A month ago, a Chevron plant in Richmond, Calif., caught fire and thick smoke sent more than 15,000 people to emergency rooms with respiratory problems and eye, nose and throat irritations. The U.S. Chemical Safety Board is investigating.

At one point in 2010, the same board was conducting seven separate investigations of oil refinery accidents simultaneously, a pattern board Chairman John Bresland at the time called "a significant and disturbing trend that the refining industry needs to address immediately."

Two years after a March 2005 explosion at a Texas City, Texas, refinery killed 15 workers and injured 170, the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration launched a program mandating inspections of all U.S. refineries within two years.

Under an agreement with the U.S. Labor Department, Utah is one of several states operating its own worker-safety and health-enforcement program, known as UOSH. To date, federal records indicate UOSH compliance officers have conducted the federally mandated in-depth inspections at three of Utah's urban refineries: Holly, Silver Eagle and Big West Oil. They've done partial inspections at the other two: Chevron and Tesoro.

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No deaths have been reported in Utah's oil refining industry going back to 2001, according to federal records. The lone major-injury accident in the same time period was the January 2009 explosion at Silver Eagle.

Overall injury rates for refinery workers, both nationally and in Utah, are substantially below similar rates for manufacturing and private-industry workers as a whole, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports.

Utah refineries require their workers to be certified in safety practices before they can go on-site.

Still, a federal audit in late 2009 said UOSH had cited refineries for a total of 16 willful, one repeat and 787 serious violations of federal worker-safety rules, under the stepped-up inspection program. Those citations drew more than \$1 million in fines. Most of that sum was levied in connection with the Silver Eagle explosions.

Refinery inspections "are very, very labor intensive," said Eldon Tryon, compliance manager with UOSH. "You can be assured we do our best."

But with only 20 compliance inspectors covering all of Utah— six of whom are trained in process safety management for refineries — UOSH is forced to direct its resources toward industries with the highest rates of worker injury and fatalities, Tryon said. In recent years, that has meant heightened scrutiny for sectors such as manufacturing and residential construction, instead of oil refining.

"If you look at the refineries' record," Tryon said, "they're not the worst actors, so to speak."

<http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/news/54844934-78/refineries-refinery-utah-oil.html.csp>

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

USA, TX, SAN ANTONIO

SEPTEMBER 15 2012.

RAIN CAUSES GAS SPILL BEHIND SAN ANTONIO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

1,600 GALLONS OF GAS SPILL AT HERTZ RENT-A-CAR PARKING LOT

Katrina Webber

The rainy weather was blamed for a gasoline spill in the parking lot of Hertz Rent-a-Car at San Antonio International Airport on Friday morning.

The San Antonio Fire Department's Hazardous Materials team received a call about the spill just after 9 a.m.

When they arrived at the site in the 900 block of West Cargo Drive, they found gasoline coming from what should've been an underground storage tank, said Walter Yates, chief of the fire department's Special Operations unit.

"Last night, they were doing some work on the tank. It had about 6,100 gallons of fuel in it. With the rains that happened, it floated the tank. The tank rolled over," Yates said.

The tank was situated in a hole in the ground. Yates said all of the liquid was contained to that hole.

"So, basically, we have a pit with gasoline and water in it," he said.

But keeping the flammable liquid in one area wasn't the only concern for the HazMat team. The gasoline spill also sent vapors into the air that had the potential to ignite, too.

"We're getting a high reading on the downwind side of it. Obviously we're cutting out all of the ignition points," Yates said.

While firefighters shut off anything that might cause sparks, they said there was no reason to shut down airport operations. The tank, which feeds the gasoline pumps for Hertz's fleet of rental cars, was situated in an area away from the airport's terminals.

But Richard Gonzales did experience a delay because of the spill. He had business to conduct at Hertz, but was not able to do it.

"I came here to do a drug test for a job and they told me to come back Monday because they've got a fuel leak," Gonzales said. "This is usually a real super busy place, so this is really going to affect them."

The HazMat team was able to douse the concern temporarily by putting a layer of foam on the fuel in the underground pit. The fire department then called in an outside company to soak up the spill. The whole operation took about two hours.

<http://www.ksat.com/news/Rain-causes-gas-spill-behind-San-Antonio-International-Airport/-/478452/16609116/-/7mj6e0z/-/index.html>

NORTHERN IRELAND, COUNTY DOWN, HILLSBOROUGH

SEPTEMBER 16 2012.

SLURRY TANK TRAGEDY: RUGBY STAR AMONG DEAD

ULSTER RUGBY STAR NEVIN SPENCE, HIS BROTHER GRAHAM AND FATHER NOEL HAVE DIED IN A ACCIDENT ON THEIR FAMILY FARM IN COUNTY DOWN.

Ulster Rugby player Nevin Spence has died alongside his father and brother after an accident at a slurry tank on the family's farm in County Down, Northern Ireland.

Sky News Ireland Correspondent David Blevins said the tragedy began when the 22-year-old rugby star's father Noel fell into the tank as he tried to rescue the family dog.

Nevin's brother Graham went to the aid of his father, but was overcome by fumes. Nevin and his sister Emma then tried to save both their father and brother.

All three men lost their lives. Two died at the scene, the third was pronounced dead on arrival at a nearby hospital.

Emma Spence, an artist well known for her paintings of Ulster rugby players, is being treated for fume inhalation.

Nevin Spence was a member of the Ulster Rugby squad that reached the European Heineken Cup final last season, and he was predicted to have a successful international career ahead of him.

He had made an impressive 43 appearances for Ulster. He had also played for Ireland's Under 20s and received a call up for last year's six nations.

Ulster Rugby chief executive Shane Logan, and director of rugby David Humphreys, paid tribute to the young star at a news conference in Belfast.

Mr Logan said Nevin died with an "immense future in front of him".

"In his 22 years he was a model individual and a model professional," Mr Logan said.

"He was a man of absolute integrity, complete determination, great humility, a fine team player and an all-

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

round exceptional individual."

Mr Humphreys described Nevin as "a dream player to work with".

"He was one of those players you sat down to talk about what his future held, (and) where he saw his future going. He had a very simple answer," Mr Humphreys said.

"He was born in Ulster, he came through school in Ulster, he played rugby for Ulster, and all he wanted to do for the remainder of his career was stay here, win trophies and be successful with Ulster."

Off the pitch, Nevin spoke publicly of his deep Christian faith and regularly took part in church services.

The player's agent, Cornerflag Management, released a statement saying: "It was with great sadness and deep regret that we learned of the sudden and tragic passing of Nevin, his father Noel and brother Graham in an accident on their family farm on Saturday afternoon.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the Spence family at this extremely sad time."

Northern Ireland First Minister Peter Robinson said on Twitter: "Deeply saddened to hear of the tragedy in Hillsborough this evening. My thoughts and prayers are with family at this time of devastation."

Emergency services were called to the scene in Drumlough Road in Hillsborough, at around 6:00pm.

They found all four members of the family in the tank.

On many farms, slurry - a combination of cow manure and water - is stored in a special tank until it is ready to be applied to the land as fertiliser for plants.

The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service said: "Three people were unconscious and NIAS paramedics commenced resuscitation efforts immediately assisted by other ambulance personnel.

"One of the four showed initial signs of responding to the efforts of the crews and was transported immediately to the nearby Lagan Valley Hospital, where unfortunately he died a short time later.

"Despite the best efforts of all involved the other two men died at the scene.

"A female was treated at the scene and taken to the Royal Victoria Hospital where she is recovering from the effects of fume inhalation."

Blevins said: "The family are well known and well respected in their local community and in Northern Ireland as a whole."

He said it was not uncommon for farm workers to fall into a slurry tank, and sometimes two people have to be rescued when someone climbs in to help them.

But he said it was very unusual for four people to be pulled from a tank.

Tributes poured in from across the rugby world and beyond for the sportsman and his family.

Former Ireland and Munster hooker Jerry Flannery tweeted: "Terrible news on Nevin Spence, his Brother and their Dad. Offering up prayers for their family and friends, unbelievably sad."

Northern Ireland golfer Rory McIlroy also tweeted his condolences, saying: "Just heard the tragic news of Nevin Spence and his family. Makes you cherish every day you have on this Earth."

The Ulster Farmers' Union said the tragedy had shocked the entire farming community.

UFU president Harry Sinclair said: "On behalf of all our members, I would like to extend our deepest sympathies to the family involved.

"This news has shocked the farming community. Our thoughts are with the family and friends of the three men who have so tragically lost their lives."

<http://news.sky.com/story/985584/slurry-tank-tragedy-rugby-star-among-dead>

USA, IA, DES MOINES

SEPTEMBER16 2012.

OIL LEAK IN NORTH RACCOON RIVER UNLIKELY TO AFFECT DES MOINES WATER SUPPLY, DNR SAYS

Lillian Schrock

Oil began leaking into the North Raccoon River on Thursday afternoon from a valve in an underground storage tank in Greene County, Kevin Baskins of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources said. But the leak is not expected to affect the Des Moines water supply, Baskins said. The valve broke, causing used oil to go out into a ravine at Krieger Greenhouses in Jefferson that then led into the North Raccoon River, Baskins said. The leak was stopped as soon as it was detected. "We've got booms in place to block the water now," Baskins said. "But about eight miles of stream were affected." Baskins guessed it would take two or more weeks to have the oil cleaned up: "This could be a challenging recovery job." The DNR has not spotted any dead fish and Baskins says the oil leak probably looks worse than it is. Since the oil was used, it contained a low concentration of benzene, which would have been deadly.

<http://blogs.desmoinesregister.com/dmr/index.php/2012/09/15/des-moines-water-supply-not-to-be-affected-by-oil-leak-in-north-raccoon-river/>