

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/>

CHINA, SHAANXI, YAN'AN

JULY 18 2013.

OIL SPILL POLLUTES RIVER IN NW CHINA

Oil spilled from a cracked underground oil pipeline has polluted a section of a river in Northwest China's Shaanxi province, local authorities said Tuesday.

Oil spilled from a cracked underground oil pipeline has polluted a section of a river in Northwest China's Shaanxi province, local authorities said Tuesday. The severe impact of a rain-triggered landslide cracked the pipeline, located in Zichang county, Yan'an city, at 4:58 am Monday, causing nearly a ton of crude oil to flow into the Haojiachuan River, a seasonal river, according to the city's publicity department. Yanchang Petroleum Group's Pipeline Transportation Company, the operator of the pipeline, immediately turned off the oil valve after the leakage was detected. More than 3,000 people have joined clean-up efforts, and 18 floating dams have been built to curb the spread of oil and remove it from the river. The publicity department added that the spill had been contained within 21 km of the leakage point as of 5 p.m. Monday. The oil-tainted river is not a water source for local residents, as it usually runs dry when precipitation drops in October. Ma Hongyu, vice mayor of Yan'an, urged local authorities and the oil company to work together to stop the oil from spreading and remove pollutants from the river before 6 p.m. Tuesday.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2013-07/17/content_16787426.htm

USA, PA, HAMPDEN TWP

JULY 20 2013.

LIGHTNING STRIKES FUEL TANKS IN HAMPDEN TOWNSHIP

Emergency crews have responded to a report of a lightning strike at a fuel tank farm at 5125 Simpson Ferry Road in Hampden Township. Abc27 reports that Simpson Ferry Road has been closed from Wesley Drive to Shiremanstown, and residents in the immediate area have been told to leave their homes. John Breutsch, Cumberland County's public information officer, said one of the tanks was damaged by the lightning. He said there is a small fire inside the tank, which has partially collapsed at the top. Fire departments could be seen hosing down the tanks. Simpson Ferry Road has been closed from Wesley Drive to Shiremanstown, and residents in the immediate area have been told to leave their homes. Those evacuated may go to Trinity High School.

http://cumberlink.com/news/local/lightning-strikes-fuel-tanks-in-hampden-township/article_8128a2a4-f0c1-11e2-8cb1-0019bb2963f4.html

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USA, PA, HAMPDEN TWP

JULY 21 2013.

CREWS DRAINING FUEL TANKS STRUCK BY LIGHTNING

DRAINING OVER 2 MILLION GALLONS OF FUEL

Crews are back on the scene of a lightning strike on the bulk fuel tanks in Hampden Township, Cumberland County. Over the next couple days hundreds of tanker trucks will be draining over 2 million gallons of fuel from the damaged tank. On Friday, lightning struck the facility, in the 5100 block of Simpson Ferry Road, at around 5:30 p.m. as thunderstorms were moving through the area Friday afternoon. John Breutsch, Cumberland County's public information officer, said one of the tanks was damaged by the lightning. The 2-million gallon tank partially collapsed at the top, and officials are worried about its structural integrity. The tank contains home heating oil. Several fire departments could be seen hosing down the tanks in an attempt to keep them cool. Officials are not aware of any leaks. Simpson Ferry Road was closed from Wesley Drive to Shiremanstown, it has since reopened. About 300 residents in the immediate area were evacuated, and were given the okay to return to their homes around 9pm. No leaks were reported from the tank, and no one was injured.

http://cumberlink.com/news/local/crews-draining-fuel-tanks-struck-by-lightning/article_8128a2a4-f0c1-11e2-8cb1-0019bb2963f4.html

USA. WASHINGTON DC

JULY 24 2013.

CSB CHAIRMAN COMMENDS DUPONT FOR ITS UPDATED GLOBAL HOT WORK STANDARD;

RECOMMENDATION TO COMPANY CLOSED AS ACCEPTABLE ACTION

U.S. Chemical Safety Board (CSB) Chairperson Rafael Moure-Eraso today commended the E.I. DuPont de Nemours and Company for fully embracing four CSB recommendations aimed at improving its hot work safety procedures. The recommendations were issued as a result of the CSB's investigation of a fatal hot work accident that occurred at DuPont's Yerkes chemical facility in Buffalo, New York, on November 9, 2010, killing a contract worker and injuring another. The Board recently voted unanimously to change the status of all four recommendations to "Closed – Acceptable Action."

"The CSB is extremely pleased with the actions that DuPont has taken to develop stronger corporate requirements for hot work activities such as welding, cutting and grinding in potentially hazardous areas," said Dr. Moure-Eraso. He noted that DuPont's new global corporate standard –in its words – "provides requirements and guidance to prevent injuries, loss of life, and property from fire or explosion as a result of hot work."

Dr. Moure-Eraso also pointed out that DuPont's new procedure was accompanied by a comprehensive rollout package that was distributed to all U.S. locations. DuPont conducted series of technical training sessions for its employees, and will provide periodic refresher training on a permanent basis. The new procedures require that hot work be avoided when possible – an inherently safer approach – and order that hot work be immediately discontinued if flammable gases reach a level of 10% of the lower explosive limit (LEL), as determined by gas monitoring equipment.

"We see far too many preventable accidents involving hot work in flammable atmospheres around tanks," Dr. Moure-Eraso said. "DuPont's new procedures are a sound model for other companies, large and small, to emulate and should inform future regulatory developments in this area." Most recently, in 2012 the CSB sent an investigative team to the Long Brothers oil well site in Arkansas, where three workers were fatally burned in a hot work accident while dismantling an oil tank. No combustible gas monitoring was conducted, CSB investigators found.

In its report on the Buffalo accident, the CSB found a number of deficiencies in the facility's hot work permitting process and procedures that contributed to the accident. Contracted workers were welding atop a 10,000 gallon polymer slurry tank in a process area when hot sparks ignited flammable vinyl fluoride vapor that had accumulated inside the tank, triggering an explosion. The DuPont employee who

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signed the contractor's hot work permit had no knowledge of the process to which the tank was connected or its associated hazards. Though the tank to be welded on was "locked out" from the process, an overflow line between adjacent tanks remained connected, allowing flammable vapor to accumulate inside the vessel where the welding was taking place.

In addition, the CSB found that despite National Fire Protection Association standards and industry good practices that call for testing the atmosphere inside tanks prior to conducting hot work, no internal tank monitoring was conducted.

The Board's recommendations urged DuPont to establish corporate policies and procedures requiring all facilities to audit their hot work permitting systems; isolate of process piping and similar connections prior to authorizing hot work; test for flammable gases inside containers prior to hot work; and require flammable gas monitoring during hot work in accordance with industry standards published by the National Fire Protection Association.

DuPont's new standard , which it designated as S31F, requires that hot work permits be initiated and approved by individuals familiar with the scope of the work and associated hazards, and that both a job safety analysis and field audit be conducted prior to commencing work. The standard also requires isolating and removing energy sources from equipment where work is to be performed and sets up criteria for requiring either continuous or periodic flammable gas monitoring in the vapor spaces of process equipment and nearby containers during hot work operations.

"DuPont addressed all of our recommended changes in issuing its new corporate standard S31F," said Chairperson Moure-Eraso. "The company moved decisively after this tragic accident to institute detailed requirements for hot work which will decrease the likelihood of similar hot work accidents at DuPont facilities, and which other companies may wish to emulate."

After examining a series of hot work accidents, the CSB released a report entitled "Seven Key Lessons to Prevent Worker Deaths During Hot Work in and around Tanks." The CSB safety video "Hot Work: Hidden Hazards" examines the DuPont accident in Buffalo utilizing 3D animation.

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

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

USA, MD, BALTIMORE

JULY 26 2013.

EDGEWOOD AUTO SHOP FINED FOR FALSE STATEMENT ON TANK INSPECTION REPORT

Maryland Attorney General Douglas F. Gansler announced Thursday that John R. Pasquinelli Enterprises, Inc., operator of an Edgewood auto repair and tire store, pleaded guilty earlier this week to making a false statement in a 2011 underground storage tank system compliance inspection report.

On Monday, Harford County District Court Judge Mimi R. Cooper imposed a fine of \$10,000 with all but \$5,000 suspended and placed the corporation, which conducts business as J.C. Discount Tires, in the 2100 block of Pulaski Highway, on probation for one year, according to Maryland's online court database.

"A failing underground gasoline tank poses a unique threat to the drinking water and overall health of the surrounding community," Gansler said in a news release announcing the plea. "Regular inspections of these facilities help prevent the safety risks and great expense that follows when gasoline seeps into the soil and eventually the water table."

According to the news release, the company's false report was discovered by the Maryland Department of the Environment after a discrepancy was observed between the report submitted by a company hired to do the testing and the report ultimately submitted by Pasquinelli Enterprises.

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The testing company had been told by the defendant not to perform a test on the facility's "catch basin," also known as a spill bucket, the news release states; however, the testing company's report had been altered by the defendant to show a passing test for the "catch basin."

An investigation revealed that the facility's first record of "catch basin" testing was performed in 2008, the release states. At that time, the "catch basin" for the regular gasoline tank fill port had failed. The next record of testing received by MDE was in 2009 when three spill buckets failed, according to the release, which also states that no testing results were received for 2010.

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/harford/abingdon/ph-ag-tank-violation-0726-20130726,0,3826123.story#ixzz2blptagT0>

AUSTRALIA, NEW SOUTH WALES, SYDNEY

JULY 26 2013.

EASTWOOD FUEL TANK EXPLOSION INJURES TWO WORKERS ON BUILDING SITE

Simon Black

A worker who was using an excavator to try and remove a huge gas tank from a work site when it exploded directly in front of him says he is lucky to be alive.

Subcontractor Alan Chan was using a six tonne excavator in an abandoned lot on the corner of Blaxland road and First street in Eastwood.

"I was moving the dirt and I tried to move the tank out," MrChan said. "As soon as it was moving I heard a big explosion."

"There was a big fireball in front of me."

Mr Chan was assessed at the scene by paramedics and cleared but two other workers who were assisting him were taken to hospital with facial injuries.

"We were very lucky," he said. "It was supposed to be empty."

"It's been sitting there for more than 30 years.

Nineteen-year-old Andrew Choi was in his house with his father David directly next to the site when the explosion occurred.

"I was actually feeding my dog at the time," Mr Choi said. "It was a loud rupture."

"As you can see it's destroyed all the windows on one side of the house."

Around the site windows of neighbouring buildings are blown out and a blanket of glass surrounds the area.

A spokesman for NSW ambulance said ten people from neighbouring buildings were assessed for minor hearing complaints and ringing in the ears immediately after the explosion but nobody else was taken to hospital.

A spokesman for NSW Fire Brigades said two crews were on scene from Ryde and Eastwood.

"There is also a Hazmat crew on scene from Chester Hill to monitor any fuel levels and explosive danger," he said.

Traffic on Blaxland road has been diverted and motorists are advised to avoid the area.

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/eastwood-gas-tanker-explosion-injures-two-workers-on-building-site/story-fnii5s3y-1226686364022>

USA, MISSOURI, SPRINGFIELD

AUGUST 7 2013.

WELDER HURT WHEN FUEL TANK EXPLODES

A man who was welding on a metal fuel tank in Springfield was seriously injured Tuesday afternoon when the tank exploded.

According to Lisa Cox, the public affairs officer for the Springfield Police Department, a 52-year-old man thought a metal tank containing diesel fuel he was working on was empty.

The man was cut and burned, Cox said.

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The man was taken to Mercy hospital and was in stable condition on Tuesday.

The accident occurred at 2:04 at 3651 E. Kearney St., Cox said.

The accident occurred at Journagan Construction, according to the Springfield Fire Department.

<http://www.news-leader.com/article/20130807/NEWS01/308070031/Welder-hurt-when-fuel-tank-explodes>

KOREA, ULSAN

AUGUST 1 2013.

SAMSUNG ENGINEERING CHIEF LOSES POST AFTER ACCIDENT

Diarmaid Williams

News has emerged that the head of Samsung's engineering unit has, reportedly had to step down as a result of an accident that occurred in South Korea last week.

The incident, a water tank explosion, led to the deaths of three workers at the plant inside Samsung Fine Chemicals in Ulsan, about 410 kilometers southeast of Seoul.

The Yonhap News Agency reports that Samsung Group said Thursday that it fired the chief of its engineering unit Samsung Engineering Co., holding him responsible for the explosion.

A water tank burst during a stress test at a polysilicon plant construction site, which also injured more than 10 workers. The news agency said a 1,300-tonne water tank was being filled to detect any cracks as part of a stress test, but erupted at around the 1,000 tonne mark.

Workers were hit by flying debris and the tank's supporting structures.

Samsung Engineering, a unit of conglomerate Samsung Group, was building the tank for SMP, a joint venture between Samsung Fine Chemical and MEMC of the United States.

Power Engineering International has placed a request for more information with the company and hopes to provide more detail on the news shortly.

<http://www.powerengineeringint.com/articles/2013/08/samsung-engineering-chief-loses-post-after-accident.html>

USA, WEST VIRGINIA, CHARLESTON

AUGUST 9 2013.

W.VA. DEP LIFTS STOP-WORK ORDER ON ANTERO GAS-DRILLING SITE WHERE FIRE KILLED 2 SUBCONTRACTORS

State regulators say Antero Resources can resume operations at a Doddridge County gas-drilling site where a fire killed two workers and injured three others.

The Department of Environmental Protection lifted a stop-work order late Friday.

Methane in a tank holding flowback fluid exploded July 7 near New Milton.

Colorado-based Antero was ordered to explain what happened and how it would safely resume work. The DEP found the first report incomplete but says a second, slightly more detailed document submitted this week satisfies the demand.

Antero must conduct a three-tiered review of equipment layout to ensure safe distances between potential fuel and ignition sources.

It will also install cylindrical storage tanks with latched hatches to help prevent the accidental release of flammable gas and will make workers wear portable gas monitors.

<http://www.tribtown.com/view/story/48eb383fb1e5468bba7834da99b2369f/WV--Gas-Well-Explosion>

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USA, FLORIDA, TAVARES

JULY 30 2013.

MASSIVE EXPLOSIONS ROCK CENTRAL FLORIDA GAS PLANT; 8 HOSPITALIZED, ALL WORKERS ACCOUNTED FOR

A series of explosions rocked a central Florida propane gas plant and sent "boom after boom after boom" through the neighborhood around it. Eight people were injured, with at least four in critical condition.

John Herrell of the Lake County Sheriff's Office said early Tuesday that no one died despite massive blasts that ripped through the Blue Rhino propane plant late Monday night. Officials initially scrambled to find more than a dozen employees after the explosions.

"Management is comfortable saying all of those they knew were there tonight have been accounted for," he said.

Tavares Fire Chief Richard Keith said possible causes of the explosion may be either equipment malfunction or possibly human error. Sabotage was not suspected.

One person injured in the explosion was listed in critical condition at University of Florida Health Shands Hospital and three others were listed in critical condition at Orlando Regional Medical Center. Herrell said some others drove themselves to area hospitals.

Tavares Battalion Commander Eric Wages said five workers walked up to a command center firefighters set up near the plant Monday night with skin hanging off their arms, torso and faces. He said their arms were outstretched and they were in complete shock.

The Blue Rhino plant, which is northwest of Orlando, refilled propane tanks typically used for barbecues and other uses. There were some 53,000 20-gallon tanks at the plant on Monday.

Tuesday morning, smoke still billowed from a storage container on the property, which consists of a couple of warehouses next to each other. The parking lot was littered with thousands of blackened 20-gallon propane containers.

Nearby, three 33,000-pound tanks of propane sat untouched. Lake County Battalion Chief Chris Croughwell said the hoses designed to spray water on the large tanks in case of fire, did not go off as planned because they had to be manually activated. "Most sane people don't stick around for an event like this," he added.

Tavares Mayor Robert Wolfe said Tuesday that he was surprised to learn the hoses at the plant had to be manually activated. If Blue Rhino reopens the plant, Wolfe said he plans to raise the safety issue. "That way, it's fail safe," Wolfe said. "We're lucky those tanks didn't explode."

The Florida Division of Emergency Management responded overnight and briefed Gov. Rick Scott.

Gene Williams, a third-shift maintenance worker at the plant, said he was at the back of the warehouse when he heard two loud explosions. Most of the workers were inside the facility, but there were about five in the parking lot.

When he went to look outside, there was a fireball about 20-feet-by-20-feet about 100 yards from the plant's loading dock.

After that, a forklift driver stumbled into the building. He had flesh hanging off his hands, and his legs and face were burned. Williams said he got the man in a van as the cylinders from the 20-pound tanks starting falling down around them.

He said they were doing repairs and painting the tanks when one of the paint lines had broken, but it was repaired. The workers were getting ready to go home when the explosion happened.

Based on what the forklift operator told him, the explosion was likely caused by a "combination of human error and bad practices, possibly. I don't want to speculate any further, that's what the forklift driver was telling me."

Williams said the forklift driver told him, "'I did what they told me to do, I did what they told me to do, and then this happened.'"

"Something in that area must have triggered it. I don't know if he did something or something else

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triggered it," Williams said.

Williams said they were able to cut off propane to the three big tanks. But they weren't able to get to the switch for the cooling hoses.

"It was too violent, too hot, to get in there and turn them on," he said.

Blue Rhino is a subsidiary of Kansas-based national propane provider Ferrellgas. Spokesman Scott Brockelmeyer said Tuesday he didn't have information available about the safety water hoses.

"It's as sobering a situation as you can possibly imagine," Brockelmeyer said. "We have folks who are injured, and we've got Blue Rhino and Ferrellgas employees across the country who are keeping them in their prayers and sending good vibes their way."

Brockelmeyer said there were 14 full-time employees and 10 part-time workers in the plant when the explosions occurred Monday night.

Croughwell said firefighters who responded to the initial fire had to wait to enter plant site because conditions were so dangerous. Just as they were finally about to go in, four tractor-trailers parked next to the large propane tanks caught fire.

If the large tanks exploded, Croughwell said, "it would have wiped us out."

Video footage on WESH-TV in Orlando showed fires burning through trucks used to transport propane tanks, which were parked at the plant. The fire sent plumes of smoke into the air hours after the blast.

Keith said the explosions shook his house several miles from the plant. "It truly sounded like a car hit our house," he said.

Herrell said about 50 homes were evacuated Monday night but residents were allowed back in about four hours later.

Marni Whitehead, 33, who lives less than a mile from the plant, said she was in bed ready to go to sleep when she heard a loud boom.

She ran outside and saw other neighbors outside and then they saw the explosions.

"We knew right away it was the plant, the propane plant," Whitehead said. "After that, it was just sort of panic."

Whitehead likened the explosions to Fourth of July fireworks. "And it was just boom after boom after boom," she said.

Herrell said officials believe the fire was contained and wouldn't spread to another part of the plant.

According to the Leesburg Daily Commercial, the plant was built in 2004 and employs fewer than 50 people.

<http://www.newser.com/article/da7ru1dg2/massive-explosions-rock-central-florida-gas-plant-8-hospitalized-all-workers-accounted-for.html>

SOUTH KOREA, ULSAN

JULY 27 2013.

WATER TANK ERUPTION AT SAMSUNG PLANT KILLS 3: REPORT

Three workers were killed and 12 injured on Friday when a water tank burst at a Samsung Fine Chemicals plant in South Korea, a report said, citing police.

Yonhap news agency said the 1,300-tonne water tank was being filled to detect any cracks as part of a stress test, but erupted at around the 1,000 tonne mark.

Workers were hit by flying debris and the tank's supporting structures.

Hospital officials warned the death toll could rise as some of the injured were critical, the agency added in its report datelined from the southeastern industrial city of Ulsan.

Samsung Engineering, a unit of conglomerate Samsung Group, was building the tank for SMP, a joint venture between Samsung Fine Chemical and MEMC of the United States.

Samsung officials were criticised for downplaying the accident and blocking reporters from the

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scene.

The company initially announced that five to six workers sustained injuries.

In January, one Samsung worker died and four others were injured following a deadly toxic chemical leak at a chip-making plant.

Samsung is the world's top maker of smartphones, memory chips and flat-panel TVs.

[Water tank eruption at Samsung plant kills 3: report - Latest - New Straits Times](http://www.nst.com.my/latest/water-tank-eruption-at-samsung-plant-kills-3-report-1.327285#ixzz2dldtgLk0) <http://www.nst.com.my/latest/water-tank-eruption-at-samsung-plant-kills-3-report-1.327285#ixzz2dldtgLk0>

USA, ARK, LOWELL

JULY 27 2013.

CREWS RESPOND TO EXPLOSION AT AERT SITE

Kyle Leyenberger

AERT Lowell Plant Update--From Sarah Pore, AERT

AERT experienced a silo rupture at 7:18 am at its Lowell, AR plastic recycling facility where the roof panels popped off, as designed, due to pressure build up in the plastic silo. Lowell fire and company officials were on site and the Lowell fire department responded, initially secured the area, and extinguished the material inside the silo at approximately 12:00 pm. At 3:50 pm the material reignited and Lowell Fire Department returned and extinguished the fire.

The Lowell plant was evacuated as a safety precaution and will resume normal operations shortly. There were no injuries related to this incident. The company will disassemble the silo, remove the material, and make appropriate repairs and safety inspections.

Additional information will be forthcoming once the silo is inspected.

Fire crews spent the night watching over a silo after a Thursday morning explosion at the Advanced Recycling and Environmental Technologies (AERT) plant in Lowell.

The Springdale Fire Department confirmed to KNWA that Lowell fire crews arrived around 7:30 after a silo exploded.

Lowell Fire Chief Mike Morris said AERT had not been using the silo since a fire last month and were awaiting repairs.

AERT uses fine sawdust and ground plastic to create composite wood products, and it all starts in Lowell.

"Their raw material is brought here," Morris says. "They begin the process here and then they ship it to other facilities."

Morris says Thursday's explosion has been building for about a month and a half.

"Their product spontaneously combusted sometime back," he says. "They've been working since that time with us on a mitigation plan to remove that silo, to disassemble it and remove any remaining fuel."

But after Thursday's events, that obviously didn't happen.

"Thank the good lord nobody was hurt," Morris says. "There were no injuries reported. Everybody is accounted for, and everybody is safe at this time."

Crews can't cool down the base of the silo, and that means they can't leave.

"Our main task is to protect the facilities around it, particularly the remaining silo to the North," Morris says. "We've managed to reduce the temperatures within an acceptable range."

After the latest incident, Morris told AERT to step up their efforts.

"We have to maintain presence on scene and we have to maintain water cooling to the adjacent structure," he says. "You can only hold resources for so long."

The Chief says the company plans to take down the silo Friday morning, and until then, at least two firefighters and a ladder truck be there watching.

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"We will be here until they can assure us that their mitigation plan is in place and has begun," he says.

The fire chief said surrounding businesses, including the post office, would be allowed to re-open but asked that folks avoid the area.

A fire at another AERT plant in Springdale earlier this month killed one person and seriously injured two others.

ORIGINAL STORY:

Crews responded Thursday morning to an explosion at the Advanced Recycling and Environmental Technologies(AERT) plant in Lowell.

The Springdale Fire Department confirmed to KNWA that Lowell fire crews arrived around 7:30 after a silo exploded. Lowell fire Chief Mike Morris said AERT had not been using the silo since a fire last month and were awaiting repairs.

According to Morris, the fire was contained by 10:30 but crews planned to remain on scene until AERT teams can remove the burned material.

The fire chief said surrounding businesses, including the post office, would be allowed to re-open but asked that folks avoid the area.

A fire at another AERT plant in Springdale earlier this month killed one person and seriously injured two others.

There were no injuries reported in today's incident in Lowell.

<http://www.nwahomepage.com/story/crews-respond-to-explosion-at-aert-site/d/story/XbDkxpGFA0-WOiHJGAnWlg>

INDIA, GUJARAT, VADODARA

JULY 28 2013.

BJP MP WRITES TO CENTRE OVER FIRE MISHAPS AT IOC REFINERY

Local BJP Member of Parliament Balkrishna Shukla has written to the Centre seeking an inquiry into frequent fire mishaps at the Indian Oil Corp owned Gujarat Refinery here, the latest being last week. A fire erupted at the refinery, located on the city's outskirts, on July 17, injuring one person. Shukla has written letters to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Petroleum Minister Veerappa Moily, seeking a thorough probe into the fire accidents that have taken place in the facility whose crude refining capacity is 13.7 million tonnes. "I have written letters to the Prime Minister and the Oil Minister asking for an inquiry into the fire accidents at Gujarat Refinery," he told PTI. As it falls under my Parliamentary constituency it's my duty to raise my concern about these mishaps, Shukla said. "The refinery has a history of accidents. Three major fire accidents have taken place in the refinery in the past four years," he said.

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/bjp-mp-writes-to-centre-over-fire-mishaps-at-ioc-refinery/articleshow/21400565.cms>

USA, FLA, TAVARES CITY

JULY 30 2013.

ALL ACCOUNTED FOR AFTER EXPLOSIONS RIP THROUGH TAVARES GAS PLANT

Susan Jacobson and Lauren Ritchie

The late-night fireball that set off a series of spectacular explosions at a propane depot in Lake County may have been sparked by equipment failure and human error, Tavares Fire Chief Richard Keith said as federal authorities joined the inquiry.

Investigators were forced to suspend their probe Tuesday amid the smoldering hunks of metal at the Blue Rhino plant because of the risk posed by a huge, leaking storage tank.

The tank, one of three bulk containers holding about 30,000 pounds of liquefied propane, withstood the intense heat that melted vehicles in the employee parking lot but may have been damaged

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by propane cylinders that flew like missiles from the flames.

Keith wouldn't elaborate on the possible cause but said sabotage was not suspected.

The state Fire Marshal's Office is heading the investigation, but agents from the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, part of a team that investigated April's deadly fire and explosion at a fertilizer plant in West, Texas, were expected to arrive in Tavares late Tuesday.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration also has opened an investigation into the latest incident, said Lindsay Williams, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Department of Labor.

The plant, which refurbishes and fills 20-pound cylinders commonly used to fuel outdoor barbecue grills, passed inspections by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in March and as recently as July 19 with no violations, according to state records.

Tavares Mayor Robert Wolfe said during a tour of the devastation Tuesday that he has confidence in the company's safety record.

"It would be different if they were continually getting gigged by OSHA on safety issues, but they haven't," he said as firefighters worked to contain a hot spot behind the plant. "The only thing I'd like to see is — if they do plan on reopening, which I hope they do — I'd like to see a little better fail-safe plan in place for the waterlines."

Fire officials said fleeing employees did not manually activate waterlines designed to protect the bulk tanks.

Firefighters, police and paramedics listed injuries to nine people, eight of whom were workers. Five of the injured employees were listed in critical condition Tuesday, according to Jerry Smith, the county's Emergency Medical Services interim executive director.

Names of the injured workers have not been released, and hospitals in Orlando, Ocala and Gainesville said the workers and their families declined interview requests Tuesday.

One of the workers was Kaghy Sam, 29, of Leesburg, who was struck by a sport utility vehicle as he fled the fire and explosions that led to the evacuations of homes and neighborhoods within a mile of the plant.

The man whose car struck Sam, Gene Batson of Mount Dora, described a "fearful" sight as "the pops started and cans started to fly — it sounded like artillery shells going off everywhere."

Batson spotted Sam standing in the middle of the road — seemingly marveling at the spectacle — but didn't have time to react. Batson, 72, said several men fleeing the plant called out to Sam to move, but it was too late. The worker was launched into a ditch, and Batson's vehicle was disabled by the crash.

Batson called 911, but when he tried to approach Sam, the heat overtook him. He said he told the dispatcher he was afraid the fire would reach the three largest propane tanks.

Sam was flown by helicopter to Ocala Regional Medical Center, where he was listed Tuesday in serious condition.

'World War III'

An estimated 53,000 propane canisters were on Blue Rhino's fenced-in property when the fire erupted about 10:30 p.m.

Most ignited, and some flew into the night sky in fiery arcs, clanging dangerously off the large tanks and rolling under trucks, spreading the fire and the risk. One crashed through the roof of Herb Welder's trailer.

"It sounded like World War III," said Welder, who owns 23 acres abutting the plant property and who has been wary of the facility since it opened 10 years ago.

Blue Rhino is a subsidiary of Ferrellgas, based in Overland Park, Kan., and one of 60 licensed petroleum-gas dealers licensed in Central Florida. Company officials offered little explanation or comment Tuesday.

"We know very little so far. It's very early, it's very preliminary," said Ferrellgas spokesman Scott Brockelmeyer, who offered praise for emergency workers.

OSHA had previously cited Blue Rhino's Tavares operation for a "serious" safety violation in October

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

2011, which involved a power tool used for cleaning, according to an agency document. The violation was corrected.

Fire crews battled Tuesday's blaze with water and foam but, because of the intensity of the fire, were forced to let much of the fire burn itself out.

The flames, which leapt an estimated 200 feet into the air and were visible from Mount Dora and Leesburg, were fed by fuel in the propane canisters, some of which were stacked in trucks parked behind the facility.

Exhausted but relieved firefighters said the fire could have been far worse and more widespread if three bulk storage tanks, each holding 30,000 pounds of liquefied propane, had not withstood the searing heat and high-speed collisions with flying propane canisters.

"The fact that those things didn't explode, that's the reason I go to church on Sundays," said Eric Wages, 44, a Tavares battalion chief whose fire crew was first on the scene Monday night.

Those bulk tanks — and the enormous risk they posed — kept firefighters on edge.

"They're ... mini A-bombs," Lake County Fire & Rescue Battalion Chief Chris Croughwell said.

He feared a larger, more devastating explosion, explaining why he recommended increasing the evacuation area.

Gov. Rick Scott stopped in Tavares briefly Tuesday to praise the work of the first responders.

Residents evacuated

About 24 second-shift workers were in the main building on County Road 448 when the first explosion erupted, said Lt. John Herrell, a spokesman for the Lake County Sheriff's Office. Eight of those on duty at the time were assigned to the plant by a staffing agency.

Keith, the fire chief, said officials "spent a good part of our night actually searching for employees."

Some witnesses who live nearby thought it was fireworks at first. Others thought the sight of flames in the distance was a downed airplane.

The smaller explosions — which also could be felt miles away — continued for half an hour, causing a deluge of 911 calls.

"The windows shook in my house," said Lake County School Board member Debbie Stivender, who lives nearby. "I thought we were being bombed."

Keith said about 60 firefighters from multiple agencies responded to the blaze.

Thousands of twisted cylinders intended for barbecue grills littered nearby railroad tracks and pastures Tuesday morning, landing in smoking heaps.

Roads were closed, and residents from about 50 homes were forced to evacuate but were allowed to return about 2:40 a.m., when the fire was contained.

Crews thought the fire was extinguished by daylight, but even as reporters were granted access to the site Tuesday morning, firefighters discovered burning plastic tank caps in a large container.

"The fact that there are no fatalities is a blessing," Tavares City Administrator John Drury said. "This was a big deal, and a lot of people responded quickly and took care of the situation."

Staff writers Jerry Fallstrom, Susan Jacobson, Lauren Ritchie, Arelis R. Hernández, Ludmilla Lelis and Eloísa Ruano González contributed to this report.

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/local/breakingnews/os-florida-gas-plant-explosion-update-20130730,0,3447866.story>

THAILAND, RAYONG PROVINCE, AO PHRAO OF KOH SAMET JULY 30 2013.

THAI OIL SPILL SPREADS TO NEW BAY ON RESORT ISLAND

Workers in white suits used buckets to scoop up globs of crude oil blackening the once white sands and emerald waters of a tourist island in Thailand's eastern sea on Tuesday, as the oil slick continued to spread three days after leaking from a nearby pipeline.

Progress was being made on cleaning the oil that washed into Prao Bay on the west coast of Samet

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Island on Sunday night, though not fast enough, and rough seas and strong winds spread thin films of dispersed oil to a rocky bay farther north, said Rayong deputy governor Supeepat Chongpanish.

"The most urgent issue is to get rid of the oil from the bay as soon as possible," Supeepat said in a telephone interview. "The longer it stays on, the worse effect it will have on the people and environment."

Provincial authorities have declared Prao Bay a disaster zone, but said that more popular beaches on the island's east coast remain untouched. There is concern, however, that if not contained soon the slick could spread to beaches across the island and on the nearby mainland.

Authorities said it would take some time to assess the environmental damage.

About 50,000 liters (13,200 gallons) of oil — about the amount contained in one and a half tanker trucks — spilled into the Gulf of Thailand off Rayong province on Saturday morning from a leak in a pipeline operated by PTT Global Chemical Plc., a subsidiary of state-owned oil and gas company PTT Plc.

The company said it detected a leak when crude oil from a tanker moored offshore was being transferred to the pipeline, 20 kilometers (11 miles) from a refinery in Map Ta Phut, one of the largest industrial estates in Southeast Asia. The leak has since been fixed.

The slick floated in the sea for more than a day before it began washing ashore on Samet Island, a small resort island that each year draws some 1 million foreign and domestic tourists due to its white sand beaches and its proximity to Bangkok, 140 kilometers (90 miles) away.

PTTGC apologized on Monday and said the cleanup will likely be completed within three days.

That appeared to be wishful thinking, however, and the contaminated beach looked much the same Tuesday, when rain storms briefly interrupted cleanup operations.

"From what I can see it's still a long way to go," said Suthi Atchasai, an environmental activist, who was helping with the efforts to clean the bay. "Oil slicks, although reduced, are still on the beach and in the water."

He said about 1,500 soldiers, workers and volunteers were on the beach Tuesday.

Tourists have checked out from the three resorts on Prao Bay, with some moving to other beaches on the island.

"The incident happened during the low season and on the quiet side of the island, so the impact on tourism is still very limited," said Chuchart Oncharoen, the director of Rayong's tourism authority. "If the spill is eliminated within three days like PTTGC speculated, tourists will likely stay."

Critics have accused the company of failing to be prepared for such an emergency despite previous incidents.

"This is a major failure in disaster preparedness of PTTGC," said Srisuwan Janya, a lawyer and chairman of Bangkok-based Stop Global Warming Association. "They must be held responsible for having no clear guidelines on how to tackle such incident and for letting the damage spiral out of control."

Srisuwan said his association has called for government agencies to take legal action and seek compensation from the company.

The incident is the fourth major oil spill in Thailand's history, according to the Energy Ministry.

In 2009, another PTT subsidiary was involved in the Montara oil spill, one of Australia's worst oil disasters, in the Timor Sea off Western Australia.

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/07/30/thai-oil-spill-spreads-new-bay-resort-island.html>

USA, OH, BRUNSWICK

JULY 30 2013.

GETGO NOTIFIES DRIVERS OF FUEL MIX-UP

ETHANOL MISTAKENLY DISPENSED INTO THE SITE'S 87 OCTANE TANK, 500 CUSTOMERS AFFECTED

Giant Eagle is letting drivers know about a fuel mix-up. The company said that the Brunswick GetGo on Center Road received a shipment of unblended ethanol from its fuel supplier, Source One Transportation. They said it was mistakenly dispensed into the site's 87 octane fuel tank. Giant Eagle said about 500 customers purchased the fuel between 7:45 p.m. Sunday and 2:30 p.m. Monday. They are in the

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

process of contacting affected customers. If the purchase was made for a flex fuel or a vara fuel vehicle, Giant Eagle said there should be no issue. In a statement, Giant Eagle and GetGo apologized for any inconvenience caused by the error. So, what should you do if you purchased the affected product? The company said to call your local mechanic or car dealership and have your car towed to the site for inspection. Customers may also contact Giant Eagle at 1- 800-553-2324 between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. to process a claim related to this incident.

<http://fox8.com/2013/07/29/gas-alert-getgo-notifies-drivers-of-fuel-mix-up/>

CANADA, QUE, TORONTO

JULY 31 2013.

OIL COMPANY DISPUTES LAC-MÉGANTIC CLEANUP ORDER

Jacquie McNish and Justin Giovannetti

A Miami-based oil logistics company is objecting to a Quebec government order to assist with the cleanup of the train derailment and fiery crude-oil explosion in Lac-Mégantic, Que.

World Fuel Services Corp. said in a statement that the order issued Monday by Quebec's Environment Ministry "is the first time the provincial government has taken the position that World Fuel Services has any responsibility for funding or supervising" the Lac-Mégantic cleanup.

World Fuel, through its Minnesota-based subsidiary Western Petroleum, purchased the oil from producers in North Dakota's Bakken region, then leased and loaded rail cars and arranged for their transport to an Irving Oil refinery in New Brunswick. The oil never made it to the final destination because a parked train operated by Montreal Maine & Atlantic Railway broke away and derailed on July 6, unleashing an explosive ball of burning oil on the small town.

The catastrophe killed 47 residents and levelled more than 40 buildings. Investigators are testing the chemical composition of the oil carried by the train to help explain why the derailment triggered such a large and unusual explosion.

In its statement, World Fuel said it did not expect to be named by the province or in any other government action because "MMA has assumed responsibility for the accident." MMA's chairman Edward Burkhardt told reporters after the catastrophe that its engineer failed to properly set emergency brakes when he parked the train on a hill near the town. Mr. Burkhardt said Tuesday the brake error is one of several factors involved in the tragedy and the final explanation won't be known until Canada's Transport Safety Board finishes its investigation.

World Fuel said its representatives have had "limited access" to the accident site because it is controlled by MMA and local authorities. Mr. Burkhardt disputed the account, saying his employees were only allowed brief access to the site on the day of the derailment, and it has since been tightly controlled by police and federal investigators. He confirmed that World Fuel's staff visited the accident scene, but their "only interest was to inspect tank cars involved in the accident."

In the early days of the accident, MMA hired contractors to clean up the burned-out centre of Lac Mégantic, which, according to investigators, is now laced with crude oil and other chemicals such as benzene. MMA has stopped paying the bills, which prompted Monday's order from Quebec to pay for the cleanup. The town has sent two legal notices to MMA that it owes \$7.7-million in unpaid cleanup fees. Mr. Burkhardt said the railway does not have sufficient cash to pay the bills and "we aren't getting funds from our insurer to meet our obligations to the environmental mitigation contractors. If we were, there would be no issue with the municipality."

He said discussions are continuing with the insurance company, Dublin-based XL Group PLC. "This is a complex matter, and discussions are continuing. I expect a resolution later this week."

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/oil-company-disputes-lac-megantic-cleanup-order/article13518237/>

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

USA, KS, SEDGWICK

JULY 31 2013.

FIREFIGHTERS TO REMAIN OVERNIGHT AT SCENE OF BIODIESEL PLANT FIRE IN SEDGWICK

Rick Plumlee and Matt Riedl

Firefighters were scheduled to keep watch overnight Tuesday at the site of a fire in Sedgwick that apparently destroyed a biodiesel plant earlier in the day.

Sedgwick firefighters remained at the scene to watch for hot spots from the fire that started about 8 a.m. at the plant operated by Green Energy Products, just south of the Harvey County line.

Crews from five jurisdictions responded to the fire and had it under control by noon, officials said. But early on they faced an unpredictable situation with burning biodiesel, corn oil and methanol.

Some cylinders and other vessels exploded initially, Sedgwick County Fire Chief Gary Curmode said. "The first hour and a half was pretty dangerous," he said. "Fires involving tanks containing fuels and chemicals are very hazardous."

There were no injuries. The cause is unknown, but the state fire marshal is investigating.

Fire sent flames and black smoke high into the air at one point and caused the metal building's roof to collapse.

Bernie Hoffman, vice president of WB Services — the parent company of Green Energy — said, "It started very small and burned very fast. It looks like it's going to be a complete loss."

About a dozen people were in the building at the time of the fire, Hoffman said.

"The good news is the building is designed to contain this kind of thing," he said. "We're just grateful (no one is injured). Not even a scratch."

Crews had to be cautious at mid-morning when fire was coming from at least two collapsed tanks that were leaking chemicals. Fire crews from McConnell Air Force Base and the Holly Frontier oil refinery in El Dorado were called in to put blankets of foam on the fire.

"They are the only ones in the area that have the foam to use in any quantities," Curmode said.

To keep tanks cool, crews poured water on them, including a 5,000-gallon tank of methanol, he said.

More than 40 firefighters worked the fire, Curmode said. Newton and Halstead joined Sedgwick County, McConnell and the El Dorado oil refinery crew.

About a year ago, Healy Biodiesel and WB Services merged and established Green Energy, according to Sedgwick city officials.

<http://www.kansas.com/2013/07/30/2914396/biodiesel-plant-in-sedgwick-catches.html#storylink=cpy>

CANADA, ABERTA, COLD LAKE

AUGUST 1 2013.

ALBERTA OILSANDS SPILL: 6,000 BARRELS OF BITUMEN RECOVERED

Alberta's energy regulator has acknowledged that nearly 6,000 barrels of bitumen have been recovered from a series of underground oil leaks at an oilsands facility, though the overall size of the spills remains unknown.

In releasing the update, the Alberta Energy Regulator noted that all four spills are ongoing at the site of the project in Cold Lake operated by Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. and have so far killed animals including 11 birds, 21 amphibians and 4 small mammals.

In addition to the recovered bitumen, more than 30,000 kg of oiled vegetation has been recovered along with nearly 27,000 barrels of bitumen mixed with water that has been processed from oilsands extraction, according to the company's cleanup data, which was leaked by a government scientist.

Cara Tobin, a spokesperson for Alberta Energy Regulator, said the company has yet to bring the releases under control. She said Canadian Natural has "fenced off the external area and in doing so can actually say 'this is the extent of the impacted area.'"

"This is an ongoing incident. There continues to be bitumen emulsion coming to surface," Tobin

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

said.

The oil company did not respond to requests for comment, but released an investor relations memo last week saying the leaks were “secured” and that “clean-up, recovery and reclamation activities are well under way.”

“The remaining bitumen emulsion does not pose a health or human safety risk and we are working diligently to clean up the affected sites,” the memo said.

Bill Donahue, director of policy and science at Water Matters, an organization dedicated to watershed protection in Alberta, said the recovery of 27,000 barrels of bitumen mixed with water is significant. “Process-affected water is nasty stuff. It’s toxic to pretty much everything that it ends up in . . . It’s laden with salts, hydrocarbons, heavy metals and all kinds of stuff,” he said.

Canadian Natural uses an oil extraction method called “cyclic steam stimulation” that injects natural-gas heated steam into the ground for weeks to melt bitumen.

The company’s memo said it believes the leaks were caused by “mechanical failures of wellbores in the vicinity of the impacted areas.”

http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2013/07/30/alberta_oilsands_spill_6000_barrels_of_bitumen_recovered.html

USA, W.VA, MORGANTOWN

AUGUST 2 2013.

ANTERO SAYS BETTER SITE LAYOUT, PORTABLE GAS MONITORS COULD PREVENT MORE FATAL BLASTS IN W.VA.

Vicki Smith

To prevent another fatal blast in West Virginia, Antero Resources says it will more closely review the layout of equipment on drilling sites, consider taller storage tanks for flowback water and latch those tanks to ensure potentially explosive gases are contained.

But the state Department of Environmental Protection deemed the company's two-page letter "incomplete" on Thursday and said the Doddridge County site will remain shut down "until Antero provides a response that satisfies the requirements outlined in the original order."

Colorado-based Antero tells the state Office of Oil and Gas that it will also require workers to wear portable gas monitors on drilling sites, and it will consider installing fixed monitors at each of those locations, depending on risk assessments.

The letter released by the DEP says the company is also looking at different configurations of storage tanks and venting systems, including flares to burn off accumulated gases. Only emergency relief lines will vent into the atmosphere, Antero says.

Five Antero subcontractors were burned and two later died after a July 7 explosion of methane gas in a tank that holds used fluids that flow back from a well at an Antero drilling site near New Milton in Doddridge County.

Jason Mearns, 37, of Beverly, died Sunday at West Penn Hospital in Pittsburgh. Tommy Paxton, 45, of Walton, died at West Penn Hospital on July 24.

Antero Vice President Al Schopp has said the crew was inserting a narrow production tube into the metal casing around the drilled hole when methane ignited.

The letter says the blast was the result of an accumulation of gases in the storage tanks, weather conditions that encouraged that accumulation, a concentration of hydrocarbons heavier than methane and "an apparent ignition source" near a skid pump.

Antero does not, however, identify that possible ignition source or explain precisely what happened.

The DEP said the blast ruptured two tanks containing flowback water that Antero had been reusing, but the secondary containment system captured the fluid as designed and none left the site.

The site has been shut down while state regulators awaited the report from Antero.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Separate examinations by state, federal, company and independent investigators are continuing to determine exactly what caused methane to ignite as work was wrapping up on the Hinterer 1H well.

The explosion is the latest of several high-profile incidents for Antero in West Virginia.

Last August, three workers at the company's Cottrill No. 3 well in Harrison County were injured when methane from several hundred feet below ground ignited and triggered a fire on the drilling rig floor.

The DEP cited Antero for failure to maintain well control at the pad near Sycamore.

Two months before that, a drilling operation in the Sardis area of Harrison County hit an aquifer and inadvertently re-pressurized a handful of old water wells. That created a backyard geyser at least 10 feet high and several smaller gushers, but no one was injured.

Workers had been drilling an initial well hole with just fresh water and air when the bit became stuck. Rather than turn the air flow off, the crew left it on as they tried to withdraw the drill. That effectively charged up the aquifer, and the trapped air sought an escape.

The crew was still thousands of feet away from oil and gas deposits.

<http://www.dailyjournal.net/view/story/2a038fda9dc34626bc90728c788e6f4d/WV-Gas-Well-Explosion/#.UfsyzY0wcpk>

USA, N.D, WILLISTON

AUGUST 3 2013.

LIGHTNING LEADS TO SPILLS IN WESTERN ND OIL PATCH

Lightning strikes have caused half a dozen fires in the western North Dakota oil patch in the past three months, leading to spills of oil and saltwater, according to state regulators.

Five of the fires occurred at saltwater disposal wells and one happened at an oil well, The Forum reported. State Oil and Gas Division reports show that the spills ranged from less than a barrel to about 400 barrels. A barrel holds 42 gallons.

The spills were as close as 200 feet from a water source and half a mile from a residence, though the Department of Mineral Resources spokeswoman Alison Ritter said all of the spills were confined to the well sites.

"They do appear small, but no spill is good news," she said. "But it is encouraging that they stayed to the location — that's the best possible outcome. If a spill is going to happen, we would much rather them be from something like lightning, rather than human error."

A farmer saw lightning directly strike a saltwater disposal well facility near Keene owned by Murex Petroleum Corp. on June 14, said Don Kessel, the company's senior vice president. Saltwater is a waste product of oil production.

The fire caused a spill of 380 barrels of saltwater and 20 barrels of oil, the state spill report shows. It will cost Murex about \$100,000 to clean up the mess and reinstall four tanks, Kessel said.

Protecting sites from lightning strikes is something companies want to do to protect people and assets, but it doesn't make sense to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on engineering for something that rarely happens, Kessel said. Murex Petroleum has taken some steps to mitigate strikes, such as making sure tanks are grounded and positioning buildings, pumps and tanks farther apart so that if lightning strikes, it is less likely to destroy an entire facility, he said.

The Oil and Gas Division does not have specific lightning protection requirements, according to Ritter. The American Petroleum Institute has standards and recommended practices for companies to follow related to preventing fires caused by lightning, static and stray currents.

The standards do not directly address production tanks and saltwater disposal wells, said Bruce Kaiser, president of a Florida-based company that sells lightning protection and member of an American Petroleum Institute committee that develops best practices.

"What we need to do is come up with a standard just for those tanks," he said.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Jerry Samuelson, emergency manager in McKenzie County, which has had four of the six lightning-related fires, said he is in favor of preventive measures but doesn't consider it a huge issue.

<http://bismarcktribune.com/content/tncms/assets/v3/eedition/0/4e/04ea7664-4193-5257-970b-620e7a0b44ec/5202afe3ed723.pdf.pdf>

NIGERIA, LAGOS

AUGUST 7 2013.

TANK FARMS: THE TICKING LAGOS TIME BOMB

Many Nigerians who have never visited Kirikiri Town will not readily enlist interest in visiting the community. The name itself evokes discomfoting feelings in the psyche of not quite a few. The phobia may have been accentuated by the location of notorious prisons in the area.

But while the residents of the town will readily allude to the fact that the correction centres – Kirikiri Maximum, Medium and Women Prisons – are about the most serene environment in the area, they will, however give testimonies of severe hardships which the pangs of tank farms' location in the place have been unleashing on the populace in recent years.

Kirikiri Town is however just one of the settlements in the axis sharing the ordeal of phenomenal traffic logjams and environmental abuse by the oil companies operating tank farms there. The Beachland Estate and Ijegun Town have over the years been hoping against hope that Lagos State government would fulfill its pledge to relocate these hazard harbingers from their communities.

Last year, the state government, acknowledging an imminent disaster in the communities, pledged to ensure the relocation of tank farms, that have attracted a huge traffic of fuel tankers into the axis. But with more fuel storage facilities being erected around the communities, the days of relief for the residents may have been postponed.

Already, some of the residents have started relocating from the settlements there, after unsuccessfully fighting against the encroachment of their environment, by environmentally life – threatening fuel storage and distribution facilities in the area.

The Kirikiri, Ijegun and Apapa area of Lagos are already swarming with petroleum tankers and the attendant traffic logjam as a result of the petroleum tank farms sited there.

Besides, the Lagos State Government has concluded plans to relocate these tank farms to avoid future disaster, saying that the Federal Government contravenes the Health Safety and Environment (HSE) law.

About 15 years ago, the first settlers at the Creek View estate in Kirikiri Town began to develop their parcels of land, which was for residential purpose under the Lagos State Government and free from government acquisition.

In 2005, Techno Oil Nigeria Limited arrived to set up the first of what would later become a chain of oil depots. Other tank farm owners at the estate are Index Oil, Swift Oil, Bovas Oil and Fatgbems Petroleum Limited.

Also, in Apapa area of Lagos, the presence of tank farms has also been sending fears to other business owners around the area, who believed that any explosion from the any of the tank farms could raze down the residential buildings with high prospects of fatalities, with the residents believing logically that the presence of the fuel depots is a ticking time bomb, waiting to explode.

The Guardian gathered that Techno Oil, Fatgbems Oil, Bovas Oil, Index Petroleum and Swift Oil, were sealed up by the Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA), for siting tank farms less than 200 metres away from residential area and operating the facilities without submission of Environmental Impact Assessment reports to the agency.

But the companies were reopened shortly after they paid the necessary fines to the Lagos State Government.

Residents of Apapa and businesses operating around the seaports have on several occasions appealed to the Federal Government to prevail on the oil marketers to relocate their tank farms, which they

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

said, were less than the 200 metres away from their houses.

The fear of having tankers being overturned due to the terrible state of the roads in the axis and having its contents spilled and igniting fire that can spread to a military installations like the Naval Base, is a fear which the residents could not wish away.

Already, The Guardian learnt that some of the executive and trustees of Landlord Association in these areas, who speak against oil tanks farms presence and the nuisance presented by their operations, received threats of being put to silence either by diabolical means or otherwise.

The residents said that only recently, the estates were thrown into pandemonium, confusion and bitter frustration following a major fire outbreak in one of the oil tank farms - the second time within a very short period of time.

The residents believed that regulatory bodies and agencies have compromised the stringent standards for the setting up of these petroleum tank farms.

They are concerned that Nigeria and the nation's vital installations may be at the risk of environmental time bomb as a result of the indiscriminate citing of petroleum tank farms by oil companies.

A petition written by the Kirikiri Creek-View Estate Resident Association and signed by Chairman of the association, I.C. P Umeh, Secretary, Ad Hoc Committee, David Oleka to the Minister of Petroleum Resources and obtained by The Guardian stated: "If Nigeria accepts that all the residents in our estate and their families are citizens of this country and that Nigeria is obligated to protecting our lives, properties as well as guarantee of fairness to freedom of living and association, then, we are urging the Department of Petroleum Resources to step into the frustrations that we and our entire families now face with these oil tank farms.

"As residents in the estate neighbourhoods closer to the oil tank farms, we are badly affected by the chemical emissions and associated chemical odours emanating from the oil tank farms facility, which have remained a terrible nuisance and a source of many adverse effects to our health, safety, and quality of life. We also experience the effects from the tank farm storage excessive noise and vibration, which could impair hearing and monumental environmental damages to our dwelling places.

"We have this conviction that unless there is an urgent intervention from DPR, there exist more and more of petrol/kerosene explosions, critical hideouts for criminals due to perpetual parking of petrol tankers and trailers by transporters to the oil tank farms, severe environmental and oil pollutions resulting from petrochemical hydrants, among others.

Adding to their apprehension is the terrible state of roads within the Kirikiri Town. "Roads within Kirikiri are death traps. Most days, they are rendered impassable by oil tankers, container-bearing trucks and trailers who pay scant attention to environmental regulations. Daily road users groan in the intractable traffic they face due to the nuisance posed by these tankers and truck drivers.

They said that the estate was currently under siege and serious security risk due to uncontrollable influx of miscreants and undesirable elements who accompany these drivers or sneak into the estate from the tank farms under the guise of working for the oil companies.

The residents in the letter, noted that for the houses badly affected by the activities of the oil tanks farms, part of the mitigating measures suggested by the DPR team that visited the estate was that the facilities operators must buy up residential houses close to their petrol storage depots as quickly as possible at prices that guarantee owners' comfort, together with adequate financial compensation to cover all inconveniences.

They said that the houses which took members of the association years to build from a deep swampy land that gulped lots of filling sands were now been viewed and priced by some of the oil tank farms like a piece of bread, claiming that they are doing the residents favour.

They claimed their efforts to ensure that LASEPA stepped into the matter proved abortive. "When the matter got to LASEPA, the agency believed that the oil tank farms were operating against known laws in Lagos State on environment and immediately sealed up the tank farms. But less than two days later, the farms were unsealed, after collecting necessary fines from the tank farms owners.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Specifically, a former resident of the area who was forced to relocate due to the fear of explosion, Dr. Chris Onalo, in an interview with The Guardian, appealed to the Federal Government to ensure that the residents are compensated for being forced out of their houses.

He said: "It took me several years to build my house, which I later sold to a tank farm owner at a price lesser than the present value of the property. I want the government to compensate me."

Speaking with The Guardian, the General Manager of LASEPA, Adebola Shabi stated: "We settled this issue two years ago. The Federal Government did not do the right thing for giving approval to tank farm owners to construct their tanks in residential areas. You know that granting of licences for the establishment of tank farms is the sole responsibility of the federal government. If the right things were done, this problem would not have arisen.

"In 2010, when we clamped down on the them, we decided to bring peace by mandating the tank farm owners to construct water drainages to ease flooding around the residential estate, which is not up to 200 metres from the oil depots in the area.

"They agreed to construct water hydrant in front of their depots and purchase fire engines to fight any outbreak of fire in the area. We are taking these measures because the oil tank farms are very close to residential buildings.

"We signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the tank farm owners. It is just that the proper thing was not done right from the beginning, because we would have been able to advise the company on rules guiding the establishment of tank farms. All the things we asked them to do, they complied. The Federal Government did not do the right thing from the beginning. If the right things were done from the beginning, all these issues that are coming up now would have been addressed.

"We are only trying to correct the issue and it's going to be a gradual process. The government has already given them approval.

He said that the Lagos State government has concluded plans to ensure that the tank farms around Kirikiri and Apapa area of the state are relocated.

"Lagos State government is looking for a way to relocate some of the tank farms in Lagos State. There is no way you can have tank farms compacted in one place like the whole of Apapa in Lagos. There is possibility that explosion from any of the tank farms could result to serious disaster in the state. We are looking at the safety aspect and we felt that there is need for these people to be relocated. We have already recommended that the tank farm be relocated to avoid disaster.

"The state government is working seriously on that. Most of the tank farms are not even ready to give back to the environment. They are degrading the environment and getting them to engage in corporate social responsibility is a problem.

"Energy Tank Farm in Apapa is not environmental friendly. Some of their filling stations are not complying to environmental and safety law. I have said that the Federal Government has done wrong by allowing them to operate".

A legal professional, Gbolahan Gbadamosi told The Guardian that the permission given to the tank farm owners to set up their businesses around residential areas, contravenes Health Safety and Environment (HSE) law.

Gbadamosi stated: "The legally accepted standards for locating tank farms is anchored on HSE. This is where companies that engage in business activities in both the upstream and downstream sectors of the petroleum industry are compelled by law to comply with all environmental health and safety laws, regulations, guidelines or directives. Such companies must conduct their operations in accordance with internationally accepted principles of sustainable development.

"On the punishment for violation of such directive, it is located in the statutory powers given to the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR). The question is does DPR has political will to enforce sanctions? To my mind, it remains to be seen whether it is so. DPR has power to close down oil installations including the filling stations. The closure is more in media stunt than real action".

<http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/focus/129172-tank-farms-the-ticking-lagos-time-bomb>

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

CHINA, CHONGMING COUNTY

AUGUST 21, 2013

FIVE WORKERS DIE AFTER FALL INTO BRINE VAT

Five workers died Tuesday after they fell into brine vat at a pickle factory in Chongming county, the Shanghai Administration of Work Safety said.

Nine of the factory's workers fell into the vat around 2:55 pm. Investigators suspect that the workers died from hydrogen sulfide poisoning.

The accident happened after one of the workers fell while cleaning the vat. The other eight workers then fell inside while trying to rescue him.

The injured workers were sent to Chongming Central Hospital. Two remained in a coma Tuesday.

The case remained under investigation Tuesday.

<http://www.nzweek.com/world/china/five-workers-die-after-fall-into-brine-vat-71412/>

USA, PA, GREENVILLE

AUGUST 20, 2013

WORKER DEAD IN PENNSYLVANIA FOLLOWING INDUSTRIAL PARK EXPLOSION

A 10,000-gallon fuel oil tank exploded at a Pennsylvania industrial park and went flying across a road, killing a worker who was welding nearby.

The tank spilled 7,500 gallons of fuel and flooded a dike encircling the area, but the spill was contained, firefighters said.

The explosion happened late Aug. 19 at Brownies Oil Co. in the Reynolds Industrial Park in Mercer County, in western Pennsylvania.

The industrial park is in Greenville, a remote borough of around 6,000 residents about 130 kilometres northeast of Pittsburgh and near the Ohio line.

The man who died worked for the oil company and had been welding near the tank when it exploded, Transfer Volunteer Fire Department chief Phil Steele said.

It was unclear what the man, who was from New Castle, was welding when the tank blew up, Steele told the Record-Argus newspaper.

The man died from blunt-force trauma to his head, and no one else was injured or killed, Steele said.

Department of Environmental Protection officials went to the scene, where investigators questioned oil company officials there after the blast.

Nearby propane tanks weren't involved in the blast, and damage to the oil company appeared to be minimal, firefighters said.

<http://www.canadianmanufacturing.com/general/worker-dead-in-pennsylvania-following-industrial-park-explosion-114081>

USA, GEORGIA, VALDOSTA

AUGUST 20, 2013

EXPLOSIONS CAUSE SERIOUS DAMAGE AT GEORGIA CHEMICAL PLANT

A series of explosions occurred at a chemical plant in the city of Valdosta, Ga., on Aug. 14, injuring three people and causing fire at the site, the *Valdosta Daily Times* reported.

The Perma-Fix facility, located at the Azalea East Industrial Park, processes various chemicals, such as chloroform, benzene, arsenic, methyl ethyl ketone and vinyl chloride. Hours after the explosions, the company released a statement announcing that all 13 employees were accounted for. Of the three injured employees, two were still in hospital in stable condition, while another one had been released after treatment.

As the series of explosions continued, authorities decided to evacuate the area and close down the

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Azalea East Industrial Park. Initially, the gas supply to the facility could not be cut and several firefighters suffered respiratory problems while trying to put out the fire. Overall, it was estimated that as much as 75 percent of the plant was destroyed by the blasts.

There are currently no suspicions of foul play but the investigation of the incident continues. Federal agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), together with police officers and arson investigators with the Valdosta Fire Department, have been looking into the cause of the blasts.

According to Ann Smith, Perma-Fix communications director, the company was "taking the incident very seriously" and was taking measures to improve safety for its employees and the community. Smith added that once Perma Fix had more information on the explosions, it would inform the public as soon as possible.

<http://www.processingmagazine.com/articles/126058-explosions-cause-serious-damage-at-georgia-chemical-plant>