



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 4
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

WMD-ERRB

Subject: Situation Report #1
Graniteville, SC
Norfolk-Southern Derailment

Date/Time: January 6, 2005/10:00 am

SITUATION REPORT #1

A collision of two freight trains in Graniteville, SC around 4:00 am today has resulted in a release of chlorine gas to the atmosphere. This release has led to injuries and deaths according to news reports. Hazmat cars involved in the derailment include 3 chlorine cars (gas), 1 sodium hydroxide (liquid) and 1 creosol (liquid). Current information is that at least one chlorine tanker breached and released its contents. No information available on the condition of the other tankers. Local, state and railroad officials are on-scene. EPA Region 4 OSC Kevin Misenheimer is also on scene. Schools and businesses are closed. Evacuations and shelter-in-place orders have been issued by local emergency management officials.

Resource Mobilization (as of 10:00 am On 1/6/05)

OSCs: 1 on-scene and 2 en route (1 from Atlanta with the small MCP and 1 from a nearby removal site)

START: Tetra Tech 2 on-scene; Weston Solutions 2 en route

Activities

OSC Misenheimer is currently working to help establish a Unified Command structure. Additional EPA resources (OSCs and STARTs) will prepare to initiate air monitoring in support of the response effort for protection of response workers as well as general public.

Press Report from AP

Trains collide in South Carolina

Associated Press

Published on: 01/06/05

GRANITEVILLE, S.C. — Aiken County officials have received reports of deaths and injuries after two trains collided here Thursday morning, spilling a hazardous chemical and sending dozens of people to decontamination sites.

But sheriff's Lt. Michael Frank said officials had not been able to confirm any deaths or the number of injuries. A spokeswoman at Aiken Regional Medical Center would not release information on the number of people treated.

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Two Norfolk Southern freight trains collided about 2:30 a.m. in Graniteville, about 11 miles east of Augusta, Ga., Frank said.

One of the cars struck a tree, knocked it onto a car and trapped a woman inside for about two hours, Frank said. The woman was removed and taken to a hospital for treatment. The condition of the crew members of the two trains was unknown early Thursday, said Thom Berry, spokesman for the Department of Health and Environmental Control.

Only first responders were in the immediate area and conditions at the derailment site were unclear, Frank said.

There were at least three hazardous chemicals on the train, Berry said.

Officials were most concerned about chlorine, which is a gas, Berry said. The other chemicals, cresol and sodium hydroxide, are only dangerous if a person comes in direct contact with the materials, he said.

Hazardous materials teams were trying to determine the condition of the car containing the gas, Berry said. Officials were concerned about securing the area and then determining how much of the chemicals spilled, he said.

The gas was expected to dissipate as conditions warmed throughout the morning, Berry said.

More than a dozen agencies were responding to the situation and the federal Environmental Protection Agency had been called to the scene, Berry said.

Those living in Graniteville were told to turn off air conditioners and heaters and remain inside.

More than a half-dozen textile plants operated by Avondale Mills in Graniteville and Warrenton were closed because of the incident, Frank said. Four area schools also were closed.

A number of people complained of respiratory problems, WIS-TV in Columbia reported.

Those who were exposed were told to report to decontamination units set up at the gym at the University of South Carolina Aiken campus or at Midland Valley High School.

Two tents were set up at the USC-Aiken campus. In one tent, people exposed to the chemicals removed their clothes and were washed down. They then moved to a second tent where they were given medical attention. Some people have been sent to the hospital.

One of the cars was on fire, emitting a thick, orange vapor, the Aiken Standard newspaper reported. Firefighters were not able to fight the blaze immediately because emergency officials were going car by car to determine what type of chemicals were inside.