



Unified Command

Public Information – September 25, 2021 at 9 p.m.

At approximately 7 p.m. Thursday September 23, 2021, a gravel company digging in an area just south of Hampton, Arkansas ruptured a gas line. This incident caused the release of anhydrous ammonia into the air. Out of an abundance of caution, and based on elevated ammonia air monitoring measurements emergency personnel issued a voluntary evacuation order for people living in proximity to and downwind of the site, and closed Highway 167.

The Fire Department reported to EPA measured ammonia concentrations at 99 ppm in the community at approximately 12:30 a.m. on September 24. By approximately 2:00 a.m. the Fire Department reported to EPA that the ammonia concentrations had dropped to 30 ppm at the same locations they were previously measured at 99 parts per million (ppm). EPA began conducting roving ammonia air monitoring in the community after arrival on scene at approximately 4:30 am on September 24, 2021. Initially, while highway 167 closed, EPA measured ammonia at concentrations up to approximately 60 ppm. By 10 a.m. on September 24, EPA measured ammonia on highway 167 at 5 ppm or less.

The NuStar Energy (NuStar) response team mobilized and joined the Unified Command on the morning of September 24, 2021. NuStar maintains Site control of the incident location and has taken efforts to secure the punctured 10-inch pipeline from the continued high velocity release of ammonia into the atmosphere. Control measures have included covering the punctured pipe with an earthen mound and installing a “burn box” or a vent and flare box atop the earthen pile to burn the continued ammonia emissions.

NuStar also brought in contractors on the morning of September 24 who began roving air monitoring for ammonia with teams on-site and in the community. NuStar contractors also set up stationary air monitors in the community.

As of 11:15 a.m. on September 24, 2021, the pressure of the ammonia releasing from the punctured pipeline reduced significantly, and air monitoring by Unified Command measured ammonia in the community at concentrations of 4 ppm or less. The local authorities lifted the evacuation order and opened highway 167 for use.

On September 25, 2021, NuStar reported they are installing Stopple T's on the pipeline upstream and downstream of the puncture on September 26, 2021 that seal the pipeline upstream and downstream from further releasing. The portion of the pipeline between the two Stopple T's will be evacuated of contents on September 27, 2021 and then repairs or replacement sections made to the damaged pipeline.

Ammonia concentrations measured by EPA in the community from mid-day on September 24 to 9 p.m. on September 25th have continued to be zero ppm.

EPA and Arkansas Division of Emergency Management remain on-site and working with county and local authorities and NuStar to protect public health and the environment.