

**United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region VI
POLLUTION REPORT**

Date: Friday, March 25, 2005

From: Karen McCormick

Subject: BP Texas City Refinery
2401 5th Ave. South, Texas City, TX
Latitude: 29.3745500
Longitude: -94.9287300

POLREP No.:	3	Site #:	
Reporting Period:	3/25/2005	D.O. #:	
Start Date:	3/23/2005	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	3/23/2005	Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

The National Response Center (NRC 753543) notified EPA of an explosion at the BP petrochemical plant in Texas City, Texas. The explosion occurred at approximately 1:20 PM local time. BP representative Dan Lutz reports the process unit which was involved in the explosion, is an isomerization unit that produced high end naptha products with a feed line that contains 0.5% benzene. Fifteen fatalities have been confirmed and at least 77 were injured in the explosion.

A Shelter in Place was issued for nearby residents and schools in the Texas City Independent School District as a result of the explosion. The fire was put out at 3:22 PM on 23 March 2005 and Shelter in Place was cancelled at 4:20 PM on the same day. The water used in the fire fighting efforts and to prevent airborne particulates from entering the air has been containerized onsite. The stormwater runoff was analyzed for analytes associated with BETX compounds.

Unified Command has been established with BP Incident Commander and other external agencies. EPA will continue to work within the Unified Command to address any potential health and safety concerns in the BP Search and Rescue Operations along with the surrounding community.

Current Activities

The objectives during the day of 25 March 2005 of Unified Command were to proactively take care of all affected personnel; secure incident site in compliance with restraining order; support incident investigation(s); establish resources for the next operational period; establish stabilization and transition plan so that the IMT will be able to transition into the recovery or Core Team; and to continue appropriate sampling strategies to ensure the safety of the workers within the facility as well as the surrounding community.

All missing individuals have been located; therefore, the search and rescue efforts have been called off. The medical examiner positively identified the fifteen bodies and notified the next of kin. Seventeen people remain hospitalized in the surrounding area, six of which are in critical condition. BP EAP consultation and representation remain at each hospital for the families of the victims. The Doyle Center that was used to support the families of fatality victims was officially closed. BP EAP continues to operate a hot line number as well as onsite support.

Air monitoring results indicated non-detect reading throughout the day of 24 March 2005. BP representatives continued to conduct perimeter monitoring during the evening hours on 24 March 2005 and throughout the day of 25 March 2005. During the evening of 24 March 2005, BP representatives recorded elevated levels of benzene and VOCs near Tank 108 located within the facility on the west end. The elevated levels were found to be the result of a compromised floating roof on Tank 108. BP representatives collected bag samples of the air in the area and shipped it to a local environmental laboratory. FOSC McCormick re-mobilized two STARTs to perform fenceline air monitoring. The elevated levels of these two constituents were duplicated during the day on 25 March 2005 by BP

employees, witnessed by OSC Leos and an EPA representative. The elevated levels of benzene and VOCs were not present in offsite monitoring. FOSC McCormick requests that BP incident command discuss with the Operational Section Chief options that could be taken to safely mitigate the emissions from Tank 108 and potentially Tank 117.

EPA R6 CID-Houston Bill Stevens and FBI reported to FOSC McCormick that both agencies have verified that there is no creditable evidence that indicate terrorist group(s) caused the explosion on 23 March 2005.

BP received a Restraining Order (RO) last night that was issued from the Galveston County courthouse. This RO stated that all operations within the explosion area were to cease until a time in which the plaintiff's private investigation team could be present to witness the operations. A stormwater pump was damaged in the explosion that operated as a lift station for a large portion of this side of the facility. If this lift station pump is not functional during a rain event, the Incident Command could have new environmental and safety problems. FOSC McCormick, EPA Superfund Lawyer Gloria Murban, and BP Lawyer Jim Galburt formerly request from the executing judge that the RO be lifted to complete operational, safety, and environmental related issues that may arise during this incident. The RO was lifted per the formal request.

Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee arrived onsite today at 1830. The congresswoman expressed her sympathy to BP and the victims of the explosion. The congresswoman also complemented the Unified Command on its organization and devoted dedication to the safety of this operation. After addressing Unified Command, Congresswoman Jackson-Lee took a BP guided windshield tour of the incident. Congresswoman Jackson-Lee also is on the newly formed Department of Homeland Security Committee.

BP continues to operate the remainder of the facility that was not affected by the explosion. FOSC McCormick request that the structural integrity of the surrounding unit processes, above ground storage tanks, and above ground piping be investigated to prevent potential releases and to protect the safety of the workers in the area.

Next Steps

Unified Command will remain established with BP Incident Commander, EPA FOSC McCormick, SOSC Rodriguez with Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and Texas City Emergency Management Representative Clawson. BP established an operational period from 1600 on 25 March 2005 through 1600 on 26 March 2005. Objective during the operational period previously mentioned are listed below:

- Proactively take care of all affected personnel and support their families
- Continue to secure the incident site
- Support incident investigation by OSHA, CSB, BP Internal, and PACE
- Manage internal and external communications
- Continue to manage legal issues
- Continue assessing resources needed for the next operational period
- Continue appropriate sampling and monitoring efforts to ensure safety of onsite workers and the surrounding community
- Stabilization and transition plans that will include de-staffing of IMT and transition to the Core Team

Two EPA START representatives have been tasked by EPA FOSC McCormick to assist in unified command system in operations and planning. EPA FOSC McCormick has also tasked the other two EPA START representatives to perform fenceline air monitoring during the day of 26 March 2005. The structural integrity of the unit processes, above ground storage tanks, and above ground piping needed to be addressed. Options to mitigate the emissions of VOCs and benzene from Tank 108 need to be presented and implemented.

Key Issues

Air monitoring near Tank 108 indicate elevated levels of benzene and VOCs. Mitigation options are being formed and will be implemented.

The Restraining Order was lifted in the incident area in order to complete operational, safety, and environmental related issues that may arise during this incident.

IMT will downsize and begin to transition into the Core Team or the Recovery Team.

Continue to work within the Unified Command and address any potential health and safety concerns in the incident area along with the surrounding community.

Continue to support EAP activities.

Estimated Costs *

	Budgeted	Total To Date	Remaining	% Remaining
Extramural Costs				
Intramural Costs				
Total Site Costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%

* The above accounting of expenditures is an estimate based on figures known to the OSC at the time this report was written. The OSC does not necessarily receive specific figures on final payments made to any contractor(s). Other financial data which the OSC must rely upon may not be entirely up-to-date. The cost accounting provided in this report does not necessarily represent an exact monetary figure which the government may include in any claim for cost recovery.

response.epa.gov/bpexplosion

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