

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region VI
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Friday, October 7, 2005

From: Gary Moore

Subject: Continuation of Action

Formosa Plastics Plant Explosion

201 Formosa Drive, Point Comfort, TX

Latitude: 28.6833330

Longitude: -96.5416670

POLREP No.:	2	Site #:	NRC # 775244
Reporting Period:		D.O. #:	
Start Date:		Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	10/6/2005	Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Assessment
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

On October 6, 2005, the EPA was notified via the National Response Center (NRC) of an explosion at the Formosa Plastics facility in Point Comfort, Calhoun County, Texas (NRC# 775244). The report was called in by the facility at 1539 hrs CST. It has been reported that there were at least three explosions that had occurred at the facility. The first explosion occurred at approximately 3:05 pm at their olefin 2 unit.

EPA OSC Moore was dispatched along with START 2 Contractors. Also, the ASPECT aircraft was mobilized to the incident.

Current Activities

The facility continues to have several controlled fires within the olefin 2 unit. The facility has addressed all high pressure lines feeding the fires and only low pressure lines continue to feed the fires. The smoke plume from the unit is virtually non-existent except for some occasional burps.

The facility continues to address potential radiant heat related issues by applying approximately 4000 gpm of firewater to the unit. This firewater volume has significantly decreased but is a serious issue. The company utilized 15 to 20 vac trucks to shuttle water from stormwater ditches to the on-site wastewater treatment facility. This activity was discontinued later in the day due to the fact that the wastewater system was being deluged making it somewhat unsafe for operations. It is expected that the companies stormwater outfalls 008 and 009 will overtop the earthen berms put in place by the company and will be discharging diluted but contaminated firewater into its stormwater ditches and thence to Cox Creek. Samples have been taken from these outfalls for analysis by both the facility and the TCEQ.

Additionally, EPA, TCEQ, and the Company's contractor, Center for Toxicological and Environmental Health (CTEH) continued air monitoring at off-site locations. CTEH will continue to conduct air monitoring and sampling on a 24 hour basis. The results of the off-site monitoring has revealed all non-detects. -detects.

Planned Removal Actions

The current major issue is the impending release of diluted but contaminated firewater accumulating in the facility stormwater ditches. It is anticipated that the stormwater ditches will begin to fill up and continue to overflow late this evening

Next Steps

The EPA intends on providing oversight of the response actions through early afternoon on 10/8/2005 after which time the TCEQ will continue its oversight of the final cleanup activities.

Key Issues

The USCG, GLO, and TCEQ provided oversight of the response activities during the initial phases of the response. Since that time, the EPA and TCEQ have assumed the Federal and State On-Scene Coordinator roles within the Unified Command System. It was necessary for the State and Federal Agencies to explain to the company the roles of the Federal and State On-Scene Coordinator and how they should be integrated into the facilities response structure.

The EPA has coordinated with the OSHA and Chemical Safety Board to provide them with whatever information they may need to accomplish its operations.

A final issue is the impending release of diluted but contaminated firewater as the wastewater treatment plant is operating to capacity and the stormwater ditches are reaching capacity. The TCEQ and the Company have split stormwater samples to evaluate the contaminants within the stormwater.

At the 1700 meeting with the company, the company indicated that based upon witness accounts that the explosion was caused by a contractor accidentally damaging a 6 inch propylene line which released the material followed by ignition of the material.

response.epa.gov/formosa_explosion