

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

Date: Monday, October 10, 2005

From: Gary Moore

Subject: Final

Formosa Plastics Plant Explosion

201 Formosa Drive, Point Comfort, TX

Latitude: 28.6833330

Longitude: -96.5416670

POLREP No.:	3	Site #:	A614
Reporting Period:		D.O. #:	
Start Date:	10/7/2005	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	10/6/2005	Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:	10/9/2005	NPL Status:	Non NPL
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

On 10/9/2005, the facility reduce the controlled fires down to one which is located at the flare header for the olefins 2 unit. On 10/10/2005, the facility reported an additional 3 small fires in the unit that appeared to be coming from tubing and a .75 inch pipe. The facility indicated that based upon company estimates that it may take as long as 3 months to burn out. The facility continues to evaluate and develop plans to contain the source of the fuel. In the meantime, the facility intends to continue to allow the material to burn. The facility continues to put approximately 3600 gpm on the unit to suppress any vapors and to control the pressures on associated storage tanks as overpressurization of these tanks will lead to opening of the relief valves and more fuel to the current fire locations.

On 10/9/2005, the facility opened its control valve at outfall 008 to release accumulated firewater as the accumulation of fire water is flooding the facility and making it difficult for the facility to respond to the fires as well as prevent the continuous overtopping of the structure. The facility samples results evaluated so far have been non-detect for volatiles and semi-volatiles along with satisfactory results for pH, Dissolved oxygen (DO), and Total Organic Carbon (TOC).

On 10/10/05, the facility reported an approximate 1-2 inch rainfall event which resulted in the failure of the earthen dam on Outfall 009. The company has since opened the control valve at outfall 009 to release accumulated firewater as the accumulation of fire water is flooding the facility and making it difficult for the facility to respond to the fires and prevent as well as preventing the continuous overtopping of the structure. The facility samples results evaluated so far have been non-detect for volatiles and semi-volatiles along with satisfactory results for pH, Dissolved oxygen (DO), and Total Organic Carbon (TOC).

Planned Removal Actions

The facility continues to conduct the following activities:

(1) monitor the flaring activities as well as the pressures of the product tanks within the unit to insure that the current fires and tanks remain stable while the facility continues its activities to isolate the source(s);

(2) continue to conduct off-site air monitoring around the perimeter of the facility to evaluate for evidence of potential off-site impacts. Air monitoring to date has shown no significant concentrations;

(3) continue to conduct on-site air monitoring within the olefins 2 unit for personnel health and safety;

(4) continue to conduct water monitoring and sampling of discharges of potentially contaminated firewater into Cox Creek/Cox Lake.

(5) remove more heavily contaminated firewater from within the olefins 2 unit to the on-site wastewater treatment plant. The facility is attempting to get the pumps in the unit working to allow this to be accomplished without the use of vacuum trucks.

Next Steps

The EPA will continue to monitor the response activities via telephone with the TCEQ and the facility.

The TCEQ continues to provide oversight of the response activities being conducted by the facility.

The Chemical Safety Board and Occupational Safety and Health Administration are continuing their investigations.

Key Issues

There has been excellent cooperation and communication between the agencies involved in this incident. These agencies include the TGLO, TCEQ, USCG, CSB, OSHA, and EPA.

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.

The TCEQ has done an excellent job in responding to this incident. Those TCEQ personnel responding to this incident should be commended for their efforts.

response.epa.gov/formosa_explosion