TPC Group Plant Explosion and Fire Update
Port Neches, Texas
December 2, 2019 1500 Update

Incident Management Objectives:

Objective 1: Ensure the health and safety of the public and response personnel.

Objective 2: Establish an incident management structure and processes employing the Incident Command System to enable effective overall management of the event with deployment of resources (staff and equipment) in a rapid, focused and well-coordinated manner.

Objective 3: Encourage a collaborative federalism approach, where Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments interact cooperatively and collectively to solve common problems.

Objective 4: Take actions to assess the on-site and off-site impacts during the emergency response phase of this incident. Provide this information to state and local authorities to assist them in their decision to protect the local citizens.

Objective 5: Conduct activities to prevent off-site releases from the TPC facility.

Objective 6: Respond to, mitigate and recovery off-site releases from the TPC facility.

Objective 7: Maintain open communication with Regional management.

Incident Overview:

On November 27, 2019, a report was received from the National Response Center about an explosion at a facility in Port Neches, TX.

A second explosion occurred at approximately 1400 on November 27, 2019. Residents within a four-mile radius of the site were ordered to evacuate. The evacuation was lifted at 1000 on November 29, 2019.

Executive Overview:

- Unified Command continues to run a 24-hour operational period: 0600 to 0600.
- One fire is still burning in the process area. TPC will continue to provide water suppression to the process area until the fire extinguishes itself. Smoke and particulate matter is low today. The wind has primarily been out of the north and northwest today, pushing the plume to the south and southeast.

- At approximately 0900 a puff of smoke was seen and an audible boom heard at the site. Upon investigation by drone and facility personnel, it was determined a piece of equipment fell. Early reports were that a tower had fallen but this was incorrect.
- CTEH has conducted 1681 readings for 1,3-butadiene since 1500 on December 1, 2019. As of approximately 1400 hours, 27 detections were recorded with a maximum reading of 1.8 ppm which was in the work area. All detections but seven were in the work area. Where were the seven?
- After 2200 on December 1, 2019, CTEH air monitoring teams had sustained readings of butadiene at 0.79 parts per million (ppm) at the intersection of Highway 366 and SPUR 136 which is part of the work zone. In addition, particulate matter (PM) readings of 0.338 ppm were detected. The county judge was notified. Work zone action levels for PM are 0.351 ppm whereas community action levels for PM are 0.137.
- In response to the instantaneous 0.79 ppm readings for butadiene, EPA and TCEQ air monitoring teams were dispatched to the intersection of highway 366 and SPUR 136. TCEQ reported sustained readings of 0.19 ppm for butadiene between 2250 and 2300 along with odors at the intersection. Between 2305 and 2320, TCEQ reported sustained readings of 0.35 ppm for butadiene along with a strong odor. It is believed that the exceedances may have been caused by the positioning of the water sprayers, which caused too much extinguishing of the flames and allowed unburnt butadiene emissions.
- At around 0200 hours on December 2, 2019, the water recycling pump for the block 6 pond began to lose suction. The pump was shut off to investigate for clogs. A dead alligator was discovered in the pump. Fish and wildlife have been notified of the incident.
- Unified Command has given permission for fluorine free foam use if necessary, for vapor suppression in emergency situations. TPC has staged 6 totes of foam for vapor suppression. The Safety Data Sheets for the foam initially used on November 27, 2019 confirmed that the approximate 1,320 gallons did contain PFAS compounds.
- Water sampling and results?
- The current estimated rate of water use for fire suppression is approximately 9,000 gpm. Approximately 3,000 gpm of the water is recycled.
- As of 1700 on November 30, 2019, there is no longer a discharge of water from the 201 Outfall. This has reduced the water level in the affected canal.
- TPC has placed 4000' of 18'' hard boom and 5300' of absorbent boom along the downstream path to the Neches River. As of December 1, 2019, the furthest extent of the sheen was 1.3 miles upstream from the Neches River. Sheen has been observed up to the Port Neches/Atlantic Road approximately 2 miles from the outfall.
- A Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Technique (SCAT) team started visual inspections today along the 201 Canal and Star Lake Canal. The team included state, federal and facility representation. The SCAT team findings will be developed into a clean-up action plan as determined to be necessary.
- Unified Command received a report of three dead birds on December 2, 2019. TPC has contacted Wildlife Response Services to respond to the incident. A Wildlife Hotline has been established for the incident and distributed to response personnel. The Department of Interior, US Fish and Wildlife, and Texas Parks and Wildlife are briefed daily and were notified.
- ASPECT conducted a fly-over of the site on the morning of December 2, 2019 and reported no detections. ASPECT is flying again at 1500 hrs.
- A Story Map has been created for the incident and is public at the [HYPERLINK "https://response.epa.gov/south4groupfire"] website.

Resources as of 1500 on December 2, 2019

	EPA	Contractors
Port Neches	3	9

Off site	3	6