Message

From: Carroll, Craig [Carroll.Craig@epa.gov]
Sent: 12/2/2019 3:12:27 PM
To: Smalley, Bryant [smalley.bryant@epa.gov]
Subject: FW: Update 3: Fire / R10 / TPC Port Neches Operations / Port Neches, Jefferson County - Notification of Significant Incident/Notification Report to State Legislators

FYSA

From: Kelly Cook <kelly.cook@tceq.texas.gov>
Sent: Sunday, December 01, 2019 4:27 PM
To: Carroll, Craig <Carroll.Craig@epa.gov>; Adams, Adam <Adams.Adam@epa.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Update 3: Fire / R10 / TPC Port Neches Operations / Port Neches, Jefferson County - Notification of Significant Incident/Notification Report to State Legislators

FYI

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** Jonathan Walling <Jonathan.Walling@tceq.texas.gov>
> **Date:** December 1, 2019 at 3:47:39 PM CST
> **To:** HSNotify <HSNotify@tceq.texas.gov>, IGR <IGR@tceq.texas.gov>
> **Subject: Update 3: Fire / R10 / TPC Port Neches Operations / Port Neches, Jefferson County - Notification of Significant Incident/Notification Report to State Legislators**
>
> **Update 3:**
>
> The 4-mile radius evacuation around TPC was lifted, as of 10:00 a.m. November 29, 2019. There are currently no shelter-in-places or evacuations in effect. A designated safety zone has been established around the immediate fire area. Port Neches-Groves ISD classes were cancelled for December 2, 2019 and plans for classes to resume will be further evaluated December 1-2, 2019.
>
> At approximately 11:30 p.m. on November 30, 2019, a distillation column fell on-site. No injuries were reported. No shelter-in-places or evacuations resulted from the column falling, but the on-scene Incident Command Post was relocated as a result. Currently, the fire is contained to approximately five visible spot fires. Firefighting water is being pumped from the LNVA Canal and the Neches River and is also being recycled, when possible, for firefighting needs. The Joint Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) is functioning and firefighting water is being pumped from the site at variable rates above 5,000 gallons per minute. The plan is to steadily increase the amount of firefighting water as soon as the request to permit more wastewater to the WWTP is approved. There is also a developing plan that will continue to recirculate more firefighting water within the TPC site.
>
> Wastewater is no longer flowing over Outfall 201 as of November 30, 2019. All water is now being treated at the WWTP prior to discharge. Pre-Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Technique (SCAT) evaluations are being conducted today, with SCAT planned to be conducted on December 2, 2019. Sheening has been noted in a wastewater canal adjacent to the facility. Water sampling will be conducted on December 1, 2019 by TCEQ Investigators.

TCEQ teams and contractors continue to conduct air monitoring 24 hours/day throughout the area. On December 1, 2019, beginning at 12:49am, and sustaining throughout the morning, action-levels of 1,3-Butadiene were recorded at a maximum of 3.22 ppm at 12:49 a.m. by CTEH contractors (TPC) at the intersection of Hwy 366 and SH 166, Port Neches, TX (work area). The Strike Team was called in to confirm readings. NRC contractors (TCEQ) recorded a maximum reading of 0.52 ppm 1,3-Butadiene at 0.52 ppm from 2:12 a.m. to 2:25 a.m. in the same area (work area). The County Judge was notified of the 1,3-Butadiene readings at approximately 1:15am. Contractors (CTEH and NRC) continue to monitor the area. Readings above action levels have been documented throughout the morning at the intersection of Hwy 366/166, Port Neches, TX (within immediate work area) by CTEH and NRC contractors. No readings above action-levels of 1,3-Butadiene, PM, or VOCs have been detected outside of the immediate work area.

Asbestos monitoring and sampling began on November 27, 2019. The results from community asbestos air sampling from the first 48 hours have come back at non-detect levels. Asbestos monitoring will continue. Today, December 1, 2019, TPC contractors (CTEH) have asbestos swipe sampling capabilities ready and functional upon request by complainants. Asbestos complaints that the TCEQ receives will continue to be forwarded to TPC for further investigation. TPC contractors (CTEH) have coordinated with Port Neches-Groves ISD and will be working with them to conduct interior (all interior rooms) and exterior asbestos air monitoring prior to school resuming at the High School and Middle School. Asbestos debris removal continues today, December 1, 2019.

Plans including the Water Sampling Plan and the Environmental Sampling and Analysis Plan were approved December 1, 2019. The Debris Removal and Waste Management Plans are being drafted.

TCEQ staff continue to staff the Incident Command/Emergency Operation Center, provide air monitoring and water quality monitoring/assessment teams. The DDC was stood down on November 29, 2019. Houston, Corpus Christi, and staff from TCEQ's Critical infrastructure Division's Disaster Response Strike Team members have been assisting with air monitoring, Incident Command staffing, and SCAT operations.

Update 2:

The 4-mile radius evacuation around TPC was lifted, as of 10:00 a.m. November 29, 2019. There are currently no shelter-in-places or evacuations in effect. A designated safety zone has been established around the immediate fire area.

Currently, the fire is contained to three spot fires in pressurized lines. Firefighting water is being pumped from the LNVA Canal and the Neches River for firefighting needs. The Joint Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) is functioning and firefighting water is being pumped from the site at variable rates above 5,000 gallons per minute. The plan is to steadily increase the amount of firefighting water as soon as the request to permit more wastewater to the WWTP is approved. There is also a developing plan that will recirculate more firefighting water within the TPC site.

Breached Outfall 201 and impacted ditches from that breach continue to be monitored. 3000 feet of boom have been deployed. SCAT will begin on the impacted ditches December 1, 2019 (TPWD and GLO).

TCEQ teams and contractors continue to conduct air monitoring 24 hours a day throughout the area. On November 30, 2019 at approximately 0535 hrs, TPC contractors (CTEH) had a hit of 1.0 ppm of 1,3-Butadiene (action level 0.5 ppm of 1,3 butadiene) near the intersection of Main Street and Grigsby in Port Neches. The Strike Team was deployed to verify readings, but could not replicate it. Contractors continue to monitor the area and no action-level hits have been documented.

Asbestos monitoring and sampling began on November 27, 2019. The results from community asbestos air sampling from the first 48 hours have come back at non-detect levels. Asbestos monitoring will continue. On December 1, 2019, TPC contractors (CTEH) will have asbestos swipe sampling capabilities ready and functional upon request by complainants. Asbestos complaints that the TCEQ has received will be forwarded to TPC for further investigation.

The Site Safety Plan was approved November 28, 2019. The Air Monitoring Plan was approved November 29, 2019. The Water Sampling Plan should be approved today, November 30, 2019. The Waste Management Plant is being drafted.

The region continues to staff the Incident Command/Emergency Operation Center and provide air monitoring teams. The DDC was stood down on November 29, 2019. Houston and Corpus Christi Disaster Response Strike Team members have been assisted with air monitoring and Incident Command staffing.

Update 1:

The 4-mile radius evacuation around TPC has been lifted, as of 10:00 a.m. Friday, which affected approximately 45,000 people.

On Wednesday, November 27, 2019, several issues made containing and managing firefighting water problematic. Power was lost during one of the explosions, which meant that the Joint Wastewater Treatment Plant (Joint WWTP) shared between TPC and Huntsman, was offline and could not accept firefighting water. The water was being held onsite by earthen dams around the facility. Because the area was highly explosive, it was unsafe to bring in frac tanks to collect the water. Eventually, Outfall 201 was breached at 6:23 p.m. on November 27, 2019. Outfall 201 leads through several drainage ditches and eventually reaches the Neches River. Sheening and product has been documented in various ditches; however, it has not reached the Neches River. Booms and skimmers have been deployed, as well as extra manpower to remove sheening and product.

Currently, the fire is contained to eight spot fires in different units inside TPC. This reduction in fire has meant a reduction in firefighting water. The Joint WWTP power was restored late on November 28, 2019, and is pumping firefighting water from the site at a reduced rate of 5000 gallons per minute; the firefighting efforts are producing approximately 20,000 gpm, so containing and managing firefighting water is still an issue, and water continues to escape through Outfall 201.

TCEQ teams, contractors, and the Civil Support Team continue to conduct air monitoring 24 hours a day throughout the area. No action levels have been exceeded.

The Site Safety Plan was approved November 28, 2019. The Air Monitoring Plan and Water Sampling Plan should be approved today, November 29, 2019. The Waste Management Plan is being drafted.

The region continues to staff the Incident Command/Emergency Operation Center, the Disaster District (DDC), and provide monitoring teams. Houston Disaster Response Strike Team members have been deployed to assist with air monitoring and Incident Command staffing.

From: Sarah Kirksey <Sarah.Kirksey@tceq.texas.gov>
Sent: Saturday, November 30, 2019 1:16 PM
To: Jonathan Walling <jonathan.walling@tceq.texas.gov>; Cynthia Gandee <Cynthia.Gandee@tceq.texas.gov>
Cc: Sarah Kirksey <Sarah.Kirksey@tceq.texas.gov>; Kathy Sauceda <Kathy.Sauceda@tceq.texas.gov>; Jillian Layton <Jillian.Layton@Tceq.Texas.Gov>; Hope Davila <Hope.Davila@tceq.texas.gov>

Subject: Update 2: Fire / R10 / TPC Port Neches Operations / Port Neches, Jefferson County - Notification of Significant Incident/Notification Report to State Legislators

Update 2:

The 4-mile radius evacuation around TPC was lifted, as of 10:00 a.m. November 29, 2019. There are currently no shelter-in-places or evacuations in effect. A designated safety zone has been established around the immediate fire area.

Currently, the fire is contained to three spot fires in pressurized lines. Firefighting water is being pumped from the LNVA Canal and the Neches River for firefighting needs. The Joint Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) is functioning and firefighting water is being pumped from the site at variable rates above 5,000 gallons per minute. The plan is to steadily increase the amount of firefighting water as soon as the request to permit more wastewater to the WWTP is approved. There is also a developing plan that will recirculate more firefighting water within the TPC site.

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The region continues to staff the Incident Command/Emergency Operation Center, the Disaster District (DDC), and provide monitoring teams. Houston Disaster Response Strike Team members have been deployed to assist with air monitoring and Incident Command staffing.

From: Kathy Sauceda <Kathy.Sauceda@tceq.texas.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 27, 2019 4:30 AM
To: HSNotify <HSNotify@tceq.texas.gov>; IGR <IGR@tceq.texas.gov>
Subject: Initial:: Fire / R10 / TPC Port Neches Operations / Port Neches, Jefferson County - Notification of Significant Incident

Notification Status: Initial

General Incident Information
Type of Incident: Fire / Explosion
Date: November 27, 2019
Time Incident Started: 1:00 a.m.
Time TCEQ Notified: The Beaumont Region was made aware (staff woke up from explosion) of an explosion and subsequent fire located in the Port Neches area (Jefferson County) at the TPC Port Neches Operations.

TCEQ Region: Region 10 – Beaumont

Responsible Party (RP)/Regulated Entity Information/Incident Location
RP/Regulated Entity Name: TPC Port Neches Operations
RN Number (if available): RN104964267
Street Address: Located at the NW Corner of the Intersection of FM366 and Spur 136
City: Port Neches
County: Jefferson County
RP Contact Name and Information: Mr. Mike Miller, PNO Production Manager, (409) 724-4917

Specific Incident Information
Description of Event/Cause: There was an explosion / fire at TPC Port Neches Operations located in Port Neches, Jefferson County. The cause is unknown. This facility manufactures 1-3 Butadiene and Raffinate. Multiple fire departments are responding to the active fire. Mr. Mike White, Jefferson County EMC, stated that they are in the process of calling for a ½ mile radius evacuation from the facility. In addition, a shelter-in-place has been issued by the Orange County Judge for citizens south of I-10 in Orange County. No additional information is known at this time.

Material Released: 1-3 Butadiene and other unknowns
Amount Released (estimated): Unknown
Affected Media: Air/Land/Stormwater
Injuries or Fatalities: Mr. White, Jefferson County EMC, stated that there were injuries; however, he did not know how many or the extent of the injuries at this time.
Other Risks: There have been reports that the fire is very close to the pressurized tanks that are located at the site.

Current Response
TCEQ Response: The Beaumont office is calling staff to the office to calibrate air monitoring equipment and prepare to go into the neighborhoods to conduct air monitoring once a safe perimeter is established. Hope Davila, Beaumont Emergency Response Coordinator, is at the incident command.
TCEQ Responder Name and Contact Information: Hope Davila, 409-791-7296
Incident Commander Name and Contact Information: Unknown
Emergency Response Contractor Information: Williams Fire has been contracted by the RE
Other Federal, State, or Local Authorities on Site: EPA Contractor is enroute, The National Weather Service in Lake Charles, Louisiana is assisting with plume modeling, and Texas Department of Public Safety

Other Pertinent Information, If Available
Weather: Fair 76 degrees Fahrenheit
Wind Direction: Calm
Potentially Impacted Receptors: Downwind neighborhoods and other Petrochemical Facilities
Local News Media: Local news stories can be found at the following links:

https://www.12newsnow.com/article/news/local/explosion-fire-burning-at-port-neches-plant-early-monday/502-de236827-a796-48f7-ac55-fad5064c3c8b

https://www.facebook.com/KFDMNews/videos/breaking-tpc-plant-explosion-in-port-neches/1813119148831422/?__so__=discover&__rv__=top_live

https://www.cnn.com/2019/11/27/us/port-neches-plant-explosion/index.html

https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/27/us/texas-explosion-port-neches-tpc.html