U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
South 4 Group Fire - Removal Polrep
Initial Removal Polrep

**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**
**Region VI**

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| **Subject:** | **POLREP #1**<br>**Initial**<br>**South 4 Group Fire**<br><br>**Port Neches, TX**<br>**Latitude: 29.9753125 Longitude: -93.9449089** |
| **To:** | Anthony Buck, TCEQ<br>Reggie Cheatham, EPA HQ<br>Craig Carroll, EPA Region 6 |
| **From:** | Adam Adams, OSC |
| **Date:** | 11/27/2019 |
| **Reporting Period:** | Initial 24 hours - 11/27/2019 |

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Site Number:** | A6TK | **Contract Number:** | |
| **D.O. Number:** | | **Action Memo Date:** | |
| **Response Authority:** | CERCLA | **Response Type:** | Emergency |
| **Response Lead:** | PRP | **Incident Category:** | |
| **NPL Status:** | Non NPL | **Operable Unit:** | |
| **Mobilization Date:** | 11/27/2019 | **Start Date:** | 11/27/2019 |
| **Demob Date:** | | **Completion Date:** | |
| **CERCLIS ID:** | | **RCRIS ID:** | |
| **ERNS No.:** | | **State Notification:** | |
| **FPN#:** | | **Reimbursable Account #:** | |

#### 1.1.1 Incident Category
Emergency Response; CERCLA; Unified Command established.

#### 1.1.2 Site Description
The Site is an approximate 100 acre, C4 hydrocarbon processing plant that makes intermediary products for synthetic rubber. The Site contains multiple storage tanks and related processing equipment. Treated waste water is discharged from the on-site joint waste water treatment plant (JWWT) direct to the Neches River. Presently, there is no power to the waste water treatment plant.

##### 1.1.2.1 Location
2102 Spur 136, Port Neches, Jefferson County, Texas

29.978056, -93.939167

##### 1.1.2.2 Description of Threat
Explosions and fire are threats along with emissions and releases of C4 hydrocarbons and 1,3-butadiene (butadiene).

#### 1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results
Due to the instability of the Site, which includes active fires, and the possibility of additional explosions, and limited ability to conduct a detailed status assessment of the tanks, towers, and contents in each after the incident began, on-site preliminary assessment efforts have been minimal.

## 2. Current Activities

### 2.1 Operations Section

#### 2.1.1 Narrative
At 0100 hours on 27 November 2019, an explosion at the TPC Port Neches facility in Port Neches, TX, started a fire that spread through the South 4 Group processing unit. The blast from the explosion caused damage and shattered windows from residential properties up to a mile away. The City of Groves enacted a shelter in place and instituted a 1/2 mile evacuation zone around the Site. The fire continued to burn throughout the 27th and a second explosion occurred in the early afternoon.

The cause of the initial explosion is currently unknown.

#### 2.1.2 Response Actions to Date
An evacuation radius of 0.5 mile was established shortly after the initial explosion and a shelter in place was issued for the City of Groves and south of the facility all the way to the Hwy 73 bridge. At approximately 0200 hours EOC was established at the Huntsman Administrative Building at 2701 TX-136, Port Neches TX. START was activated at 0245 hours and arrived on Site at 0530 hours. EPA OSC was activated to respond. ASPECT was deployed and on site by 0800 hours to conduct flyovers of the incident

and downwind community. A no fly zone of 3 miles wide and 3000' high was established surrounding the incident.

START air monitoring teams were also activated to respond and conduct ground air monitoring around the vicinity of the incident and in the downwind community.

Water Safety Zone was established by USCG from Neches River Light 20 (Fina Lower Anchorage) to Neches River Light 29 (Phillips 66). USCG are currently allowing barge traffic monitored one at a time. In addition to ASPECT air monitoring, there are currently 3 EPA air monitoring teams collecting data downwind and in the community. There have been no detections of VOCs by the EPA air monitoring teams at this time.

On behalf of TPC, CTEH conducted perimeter air monitoring around the Site and has detected a single maximum concentration of 1.2 ppm VOCs. At approximately 1348 a second explosion occurred at the Site. After the second explosion, the County Judge's Office expanded the mandatory evacuation zone to a 4-mile radius.

In addition, TCEQ is conducting air monitoring in the community with four teams. An air monitoring strike team was established, which is comprised of personnel from EPA, TCEQ, and TPC. This strike team will be dispatched to conduct air monitoring at locations where detections were measured above the 5.0 ppm VOC action level or 0.5 ppm butadiene action level, to determine sustained or instantaneous measurements.

**2.1.3 Enforcement Activities, Identity of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)**
The PRP for this incident, at this time, is Texas Petrochemical (TPC) located in Port Neches, Texas.

**2.1.4 Progress Metrics**
No progress metrics have been provided at this time by TPC.

Air monitoring action levels were established for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's) at 5 parts per million (ppm) and 1,3-butadiene at 0.5 ppm.

There have been no reported air monitoring results detected nor detected above action levels by EPA ground air monitoring teams nor the ASPECT air monitoring conducted during the initial 24 hours.

| *Waste Stream* | *Medium* | *Quantity* | *Manifest #* | *Treatment* | *Disposal* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |
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**2.2 Planning Section**

**2.2.1 Anticipated Activities**
Response efforts will be ramped up or down as dictated by the incident. TPC has been directed to contain and recover liquid spillage and fire water. Air monitoring efforts will continue in the impacted area and downwind community. Fire suppression will be continued. Unified Command will continue to share information with the stakeholders and community. Unified Command will continue to communicate any air monitoring measurements in the community above Unified Command approved action levels to local authorities for actions to be determined and communicated to the community. Actions may include shelter in place or evacuation.

**2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities**
Continue air monitoring throughout the impacted area and downwind community.
Contain and recover released liquids.
Continue fire suppression and vapor suppression, if needed.

**2.2.1.2 Next Steps**
Operations are 24 hours/day and began with two operational periods (0100 to 1300 and 1300 to 0100). Unified Command determined a 24 hour operational period from 0600 to 0600 would be followed for the next operational period going forward.

**2.2.2 Notes**
Air monitoring action levels were established for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's) at 5 parts per million (ppm) and 1,3-butadiene at 0.5 ppm.

There have been no reported air monitoring results detected nor detected above action levels by EPA ground air monitoring teams nor the ASPECT air monitoring conducted during the initial 24 hours.

**2.3 Logistics Section**

NA

**2.4 Finance Section**

NA

**2.5 Other Command Staff**

NA

**3. Participating Entities**

**3.1 Unified Command**
Unified Command was established on 11/27/2019 with TPC, EPA, TCEQ, and County and Local authorities.

**3.2 Cooperating Agencies**
Additional agencies that have responded or are responding include OSHA, USCG, NOAA, Jefferson County

Judge's Office, Port Neches Police Department, DPS, Civil Support Team, Texas Department of Emergency Management, Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, Port Neches Fire Department, Nederland Fire Department, Port Arthur Fire Department, Groves Fire Department, Silsvee Volunteer Fire Department, Port Arthur Police Department, Golden Triangle Incident Management Team, Southeast Texas Regional Advisory Council, Groves Police Department, Nederland Police Department, Port Neches Police Department, Jefferson County Office of Emergency Management, Acadian Emergency Management Services, Texas General Land Office, Texas Highway Patrol, Lower Neches Valley Authority, and Drainage District #7. This list is not all inclusive.

**4. Personnel On Site**

Representatives from participating agencies are present at their discretion.

**5. Definition of Terms**

No information available at this time.

**6. Additional sources of information**

**6.1 Internet location of additional information/report**

Additional information can be obtained at www.response.epa.gov/south4groupfire.

**6.2 Reporting Schedule**

Additional POLREP's will be provided as needed. A Final POLREP will be submitted upon completion.

**7. Situational Reference Materials**

No information available at this time.