



## Dangerous Goods - Hazardous Materials Group & Network Release 2011 – 695 Newsy Stuff

<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/DangerousGoods>

**March 18 2011**



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### JAPAN, TOKYO, MARCH 13 2011. PARTIAL MELTDOWN LIKELY UNDER WAY AT POWER PLANT, JAPANESE OFFICIAL SAYS

steven mufson

**A partial meltdown is likely under way at one nuclear power plant affected by Friday's earthquake, according to Japan's top government official, the Associated Press reports.**

[Watch the Video Nuclear meltdown new threat for Japan](#)

An explosion at a nuclear power plant on Japan's devastated coast destroyed a building Saturday and made leaking radiation, or even outright meltdown, the central threat menacing a nation.

#### **How the nuclear emergency unfolded**

See the events that caused an explosion at a nuclear plant in Japan.

**Interactive Map:** [View the map](#)



Friday's massive earthquake triggered a powerful tsunami that devastated the coastline north of Tokyo. See tsunami intensity, affected areas and aftershocks.

*A partial meltdown is likely under way at one nuclear power plant affected by Friday's earthquake, according to [Japan's](#) top government official, the Associated Press reports.*

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano said radiation at the plant in Fukushima was briefly above legal limits but has declined significantly. Tokyo Electric Power Co., owner of two heavily damaged nuclear power complexes near the center of Friday's earthquake, told Japanese regulators earlier Sunday that it faced a new emergency at one of its 10 reactors, even as it struggled to bring several others under control. Earlier, the big electric utility took the unprecedented step of pumping seawater mixed with boric acid into the core of Fukushima Daiichi's Unit 1 reactor to tame ultra-high temperatures from fuel rods that had been partially

exposed. In keeping with the natural as well as mechanical challenges of the week, the company had to delay the plan briefly after another, more mild, earthquake rocked the area and led to another tsunami warning. The battle at that reactor was just one of several being waged in the worst nuclear power crisis in a quarter-century. Tokyo Electric said it had also vented or planned to vent steam and gas containing small amounts of radioactivity from seven of its reactor units. The company said that one employee, who had been working inside a reactor building, had been hospitalized for radiation exposure. While Japanese authorities tried to calm citizens, they also began evacuating more than 200,000 residents from a 12.5-mile radius around two nuclear power complexes, made preparations to distribute potassium iodide pills, and warned people in the vicinity to stay inside and cover their mouths if they ventured outdoors. Federal safety agency officials said that as many as 160 people had been exposed to radiation from the plants. "Only the gravest danger would justify an evacuation at such a moment," said Peter Bradford, a former commissioner at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The evacuation, wider than announced the day before, followed an explosion Saturday that destroyed a building that housed both the reactor vessel and its containment building. Four workers were injured, but Japanese authorities said the containment building was intact. The explosion was yet another indicator of dire problems inside Fukushima Daiichi Unit 1, problems that might be plaguing other units as well. The explosion was caused by hydrogen, which nuclear experts said could only have been produced from inside the reactor vessel by the exposure of zirconium cladding that surrounds the fuel rods. Those rods are supposed to be covered by water, but at extremely high temperatures, steam reacts with the zirconium and produces hydrogen. When pressure rose in the reactor vessel, it vented the gas into the containment building that surrounds it for just such an emergency. But experts believe that devices designed to ignite the hydrogen before it reached dangerous levels were not working because of power failures. Those power failures helped start the crisis at the nuclear plants. After grid power was knocked out by the quake, the tsunami flooded and disabled backup diesel generators, and battery power ran out. Margaret Harding, a U.S. nuclear safety consultant in touch with experts in Japan, said that the entire complex was blacked out for a period of time before new backup generators arrived. Another indication that the fuel rods in Fukushima Daiichi Unit 1 were exposed is that Japan's Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA) said Saturday that the reactor could be nearing a meltdown and that two radioactive substances, cesium and radioactive iodine, had already been detected nearby. The explosion also rattled public confidence, sparking a run on bottled water in Tokyo. Japan has an ambivalent relationship with nuclear issues. As victim of the only wartime nuclear bombings, it opposes such weapons. But as a resource-scarce country, it has turned to nuclear power to help fuel its economy. Japan's dependence on nuclear energy soared after 1973 in response to skyrocketing oil prices that year. In 2002,

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the country mapped a future that sought to decrease the country's greenhouse gas emissions by further increasing its reliance on nuclear power. Current plans call for 50 percent of the country's electricity to come from nuclear plants by 2017, up from about 30 percent today. The country has 54 nuclear reactors. Fukushima Daiichi Unit 1 is one of the oldest operating nuclear plants in Japan, turning 40 years old on March 26. NISA, the country's regulatory authority for the sector, licenses reactors to operate for 40 years - meaning that Unit 1 was scheduled to be taken offline this month. It is unclear whether NISA had planned to extend the reactor's license. There are 23 reactors in the United States with the same design as Fukushima Daiichi Unit 1. Experts said that the decision to pump seawater into the unit was a recognition that the elaborate system of valves, pumps and pipes, and the layers of steel and concrete, might not be enough to guarantee that the nuclear facility could avoid a disaster of Chernobyl proportions. The water and boric acid would absorb neutrons, Tokyo Electric said. But experts said it would also make it unlikely that the plant would operate again. "We're past worrying about ruining the reactor," said Victor Gilinsky, another former commissioner at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. "It's gone." Already, Tokyo Electric reported that radiation levels next to the Unit 1 building had increased nearly a hundredfold. The Nuclear Energy Institute said that the incident at Fukushima Daiichi had been given a rating of 4 on its 7-point International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale, lower than the 5 earned by the 1979 Three Mile Island incident in Pennsylvania and the 7 earned by the 1986 Chernobyl disaster. But many experts said it was too early to reach conclusions while new information was emerging. Meanwhile, Tokyo Electric was still trying to get control over reactors at its Fukushima Daiichi site. A water condensate system used to supplement the cooling system at Fukushima Daiichi Unit 1 stopped working when temperatures reached 100 degrees Celsius. Tokyo Electric also announced that it would carry out controlled releases to ease pressure in the containments of all four units at Fukushima Daiichi. Nuclear safety experts were seeking answers to other questions about Japan's nuclear facilities that have been obscured by the focus on the Fukushima reactors. The nuclear plants also have spent fuel pools that some experts say may have spilled during the earthquake and its aftershocks. Tokyo Electric has not commented yet on those pools, which in the case of the GE-designed reactors are located on the roof, possibly making them vulnerable. Similar pools are found at other nuclear power plants around the country. The U.S. government and private companies said they had offered assistance to Japan but had not received any requests. The Energy Department said it was "in close contact" with its Japanese counterparts and would "provide whatever assistance they request to help them bring the reactors under control."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/03/12/AR2011031205493.html?hpid=topnews>

### CANADA, CALGARY, MARCH 13 2011. BUSINESS OWNERS WORRIED ABOUT GAS LEAK IN BOWNESS

**Watch the Video:**

[http://calgary.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20110312/CGY\\_gasplus\\_leak\\_110312/20110312/?hub=CalgaryHome](http://calgary.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20110312/CGY_gasplus_leak_110312/20110312/?hub=CalgaryHome)



*Gas Plus Inc., told the province that up to 9,000 litres of gas leaked from this Bowness station over several months.*

Business owners near the Gas Plus station in Bowness are concerned they are being kept in the dark about the magnitude of contamination in the area. Last year, a leak was discovered at the gas station, and it's believed that upwards of 9,000 litres of fuel have seeped into the surrounding neighborhood soil. People operating businesses want to make sure they, and their customers, are safe. When Patience Gold, owner of Afrikana Beauty Supplies, saw city workers looking into a water main break near her store last week, she started thinking it might have to do with the Gas Plus station down the street. "I've been wondering what's been going on in Gas Plus, if has anything to do with the water. And if that's the case, oh my god, are we going to be sick from it? Why is no one going to talk to us about it?" she said. She and her husband Rick Gold began to discuss with other business owners in the same strip mall to find out what they knew about a Gas Plus connection to their water supply. An environmental order is in place and an engineering company has been hired to determine how far an area has been affected by the gas leak. "I think from what I gather, these kinds of toxic spills can be dangerous to your health," said another area business owner J.D. Esler. "A good clean-up, you wonder if that's enough." The Golds say their children regularly come to the shop, and they want to know that it's safe. "I think if the city were to visit surrounding businesses, and keep them informed, then at least we'd feel a little better," Rick Gold said. In August, gasoline vapors were detected in the basement of a nearby home. Alberta Environment advised three families to move out of their homes because of the leak. The final report hasn't been completed yet on the magnitude of the fuel leak with engineers still trying to assess if gas has made its way to the Bow River. Up to 15 homes and four businesses have been impacted by the leak.

[http://calgary.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20110312/CGY\\_gasplus\\_leak\\_110312/20110312/?hub=CalgaryHome](http://calgary.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20110312/CGY_gasplus_leak_110312/20110312/?hub=CalgaryHome)

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### USA, N.Y, NEW YORK, MARCH 13 2011. RAN LABELS CHEVRON'S DEFENSE TEAM 'HUMAN RIGHTS HITMAN', LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

*daniel kessler*

It's been month since the [historic ruling in Ecuador](#) that found Chevron guilty of polluting a large swath of the Ecuadorean Amazon. In response, as it has said all along, Chevron has vowed to not pay the \$8.6 billion fine imposed on it, and on Thursday it won a preliminary injunction in a federal court in New York against the indigenous plaintiffs in the case. Many NGOs are fighting alongside the injured indigenous community, led by the Rainforest Action Network, which has a new website up that singles out what it calls Chevron's "[Human Rights Hitmen](#)." RAN's online campaigner Mike Gaworecki tells me: *"From its legal advisers to its PR flacks and dirty tricks operatives, Chevron has employed a crack team of folks who are paid to help the company avoid responsibility for its massive oil contamination in the Ecuadorean Amazon. With last month's historic verdict, there is no longer any question about Chevron's guilt. Chevron may be rich and powerful, but it's not above the law."*

In response to the ruling in Ecuador, [Chevron filed a Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act](#) (RICO) suit, originally intended by Congress as a tool to fight the mafia. That case is ongoing, but the injunction is further evidence that this fight is long from over. You can [check out the site for yourself](#) and make your own judgments about Chevron's guilt and responsibility to provide remediation and compensation. And here's a story about [Ecuador's Ambassador to the US](#) taking umbrage with the injunction.

#### More on Chevron:

- [Judge Halts \\$18 Billion Fine Against Chevron for Pollution in the Amazon](#)
- [After Almost 20 Years of Legal Battles, Chevron Fined \\$8 Billion for Amazon Pollution](#)

<http://www.treehugger.com/files/2011/03/ran-chevron-hitmen.php>

### AUSTRALIA, NEW SOUTH WALES, MARCH 14 2011. MYSTERY FUMES HIT RECYCLERS

*kree nash*



*4 Hospitalised: An unknown hazardous substance left four employees at Kurrajong Waratah needing hospital treatment yesterday. Police, firefighters, a hazmat team and paramedics were called to the business in the hopes of finding what caused the employees to become ill.*

A Wagga hazmat team was left stumped yesterday about the source of noxious fumes which left four employees of Kurrajong Waratah Recyclers in hospital. Initially believed to be a chemical spill, the incident brought police, a hazmat team, firefighters and paramedics to the facility around 1pm, after the employees were overcome by fumes. The building was evacuated while the fire brigade and paramedics were called. Fire and rescue duty commander for the Wagga area Duncan White said an unknown chemical had escaped from a steel can while it was being crushed and baled. "It became apparent a can had erupted with some sort of chemical escaping which left five workers overcome. Four were taken to hospital, with one who refused transport," he said. After isolating the area a Hazmat team set about trying to identify the chemical. "We have gas detectors, but we couldn't get any readings in the open area. If there was a little breeze circulating it could have carried the gas away. "We broke apart the bale in questions, but it proved inconclusive," Mr White said. Satisfied there was no residual chemical in the area, the site was declared safe with the cause of the employee's illness undetermined. Kurrajong Waratah Recyclers operations manager Tim Macgillycuddy said employees were able to return to work yesterday afternoon. "Our procedures went well and everyone was evacuated. Some staff have gone back to work, but the majority have

knocked off." He said the incident was the first of its kind since the facility opened and he was glad no one was seriously injured. The four males taken to hospital were 20, 46, 47 and 49-years-old and were in stable condition at Wagga Base Hospital. Three were expected to be released last night. Workcover were alerted to the incident and an inspector was sent out. A spokeswoman said Workcover would be working closely with the recycling centre and Hazmat team to look into the circumstances surrounding the incident.

<http://www.dailyadvertiser.com.au/news/local/news/general/mystery-fumes-hit-recyclers/2101466.aspx>

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#### AUSTRALIA, QUEENSLAND, MACKAY, MARCH 14 2011. HUGE DIESEL SPILL AS TRAIN COLLIDES WITH TANKER ON SPILLER AVE, MACKAY HARBOUR, ON SUNDAY NIGHT

*brooke baski*

A crash between a train and a diesel tanker sparked a massive diesel leak at Mackay Harbour overnight. The train and the truck were believed to be travelling in the same direction when they collided on [Spiller Avenue](#), Mackay at 9.30pm. More than 11,000 litres of diesel leaked from the tanker after a hole was ripped in its hull. Department of Environment and Resource Management staff, Queensland Rail staff, emergency crews and the port authority all worked to stem the leak and clear the scene. No diesel entered the waterways nearby. No one was injured in the incident.

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/huge-diesel-spill-as-train-collides-with-tanker-on-spiller-ave-mackay-harbour-on-sunday-night/story-e6freomx-1226020870036>

#### USA, MN, ST CLOUD, MARCH 14 2011. HAZARDOUS MATERIAL SITS NEAR COUNTRY CLUB SINCE OCTOBER



*Piles of spilled resin sit covered in plastic and snow March 3 in the parking lot at the St. Cloud Country Club.*

More than five months after a spill of potentially hazardous liquid near the St. Cloud Country Club, the site still hasn't been fully cleaned up. The accident occurred Oct. 6 when a full tanker truck overturned on private property in the parking lot of the country club's driving range. The area is in a residential neighborhood at the intersection of Montrose Road and Lancewood Drive. About 1,500 gallons of resin containing styrene were spilled. Some was removed immediately, but several piles of resin mixed with sand remain covered with plastic and surrounded by yellow caution tape. The cleanup has been delayed by winter, a debate about whether the

material should be considered hazardous and a dispute between the contractor and its insurance company. An emergency responder with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency acknowledged it's "very unusual" for a spill not to be cleaned up after so long. But Walt Haas said the material isn't a public threat and the site should be restored within the next few months. The city of St. Cloud contracted with Spiniello Cos., a New Jersey-based company, last year to reline an aging sanitary sewer line about 40 feet below ground. A fabric liner is injected into the pipe along with a resin, which hardens the fabric. Early in the morning of Oct. 6, one of Spiniello's tanker trucks parked on dirt tipped over, releasing about 1,500 gallons of resin. The resin contains styrene, a chemical used in the manufacture of plastics. Styrene has a strong odor and is considered flammable with a relatively low flash point of 89 degrees. The flash point is the lowest temperature at which a vapor can ignite. Patrick Kolling, who lives next to the spill site on Golf Terrace, recalls it was a warm evening and his bedroom window was open when the spill occurred. He awoke when he heard the tanker crash and people yelling. The smell was terrible and there was liquid resin standing on the ground, Kolling said. He and other nearby residents were evacuated and allowed to return the next day. Spiniello tried to recover the spilled material but decided its equipment couldn't do so. It contracted with St. Paul-based Bay West to handle the cleanup. Bay West collected nine drums of resin before its pumps began to malfunction due to the material's thickness. Sand was added and four more containers were filled. The decision was made to allow the project to continue. Once the relining starts, it needs to continue or the resin will harden and destroy the sewer line, Haas said. "That project could not stop," he said. Sand was mixed with the remaining spilled resin, and it covers a 40-by-100-foot area. Spiniello estimates the top 15 inches of soil could be contaminated, but the city of St. Cloud and the MPCA required that soil testing be done to determine the extent of contamination. The soil tests were conducted two weeks ago and results are expected any day, said Bob Jopp, a civil engineer for the city of St. Cloud. The extent of the contamination will determine how much soil will need to be removed. Jopp said the remaining resin and sand mixture contains a relatively low concentration of styrene, "so there really isn't a risk out there" in cold weather. "You would have to have a high concentration and you would have to have the right air temperature," Jopp said. The effects of styrene on human health aren't entirely clear. There are standards for workers who are regularly exposed to styrene vapors. They can cause irritation of the skin, eyes and upper respiratory tract. Several studies suggest there could be a link between styrene exposure and an increased risk of leukemia and lymphoma. However, the evidence is inconclusive. The International Agency for Research on Cancer classifies styrene as a potential carcinogen. The MPCA monitored the air during the initial cleanup and digging of the test pits, Haas said. The level of styrene in the air was very low and did not pose any threat, he said. Kolling, recalling that the weather was unseasonably warm that week, wonders why he wasn't told about styrene's low flash point immediately after the spill. The National Weather Service recorded a high temperature of 71 degrees in St. Cloud on Oct. 6. Two days later, a record high temperature of 84 degrees was recorded. The St. Cloud Fire Department was on scene immediately after the spill and monitored the air for potential

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flammability, Haas said. The spilled material is nearly insoluble, Haas said, so it does not tend to move through the ground like petroleum. The homes in the area all use the city's drinking water system, so there is no concern about wells being contaminated, he said. Still, the MPCA and the city say they will hold Spiniello responsible for cleaning up the spill and restoring the property. Robert Graff, an attorney representing Spiniello, said the company wants to clean up the site as quickly as possible. Spiniello proposed a work plan in mid-December, but it was rejected by the MPCA in January because it didn't include soil testing to determine the extent of the contamination. Testing of the soil was done in February. Spiniello submitted a new plan to the MPCA last Friday. "We hope they approve it and we can move quickly. That is our goal," Graff said. Spiniello's initial plan proposed that the material be classified as nonhazardous. Disposing of hazardous material is more costly because it must be taken to a special landfill. The MPCA's Haas said the material will have to be treated as hazardous. Workers attempted to get the styrene to react to a catalyst so it would become inert, but failed because of the surrounding sand. That means "unfortunately, they're stuck treating it as hazardous material," Haas said. Another reason for the delay has been Spiniello's efforts to get its insurance company to pay for the cleanup, Haas said. The cost could exceed \$750,000. The city has requested a new work plan from Spiniello, Jopp said. Although MPCA standards allow up to 200 parts per million of styrene, the city wants to know if it's possible to go beyond those standards and get to a level of zero, he said. "We want to clean up the site as best we can realistically," Jopp said. Rollie Carlson, general manager of the St. Cloud Country Club, said the driving range will open a little later than normal this year, although he's not sure exactly when. Carlson said he's comfortable with the progress of the cleanup. "The right people are doing the right things," he said. But Kolling is frustrated that he's lost the use of his backyard at least temporarily, and worries about the long-term impact of the spill on his property value. He wants the area completely cleaned up and to be compensated for any damages. "It's taken away from the enjoyment of our property," Kolling said. Haas said Spiniello probably will not face any penalties or corrective action as a result of the spill, which he called "an accident." Jopp said the city of St. Cloud likely will continue to work with Spiniello in the future. He noted this was the nationwide company's first styrene spill. "Unfortunately, it happened in our city," Jopp said.

<http://www.sctimes.com/article/20110313/NEWS01/103130041/1009/RSS/In-depth--Hazardous-material-sits-near-country-club-since-October>

#### USA, VT, BURLINGTON, MARCH 14 2011. GAS LEAK POLLUTES HINESBURG TOWN WELLS

candace page



*Rachel Lomonaco, an engineer with Heindel & Noyes, takes samples at Hinesburg's pump house on Wednesday, March 9, 2011.*

Hinesburg's two town wells are contaminated by tiny amounts of MTBE, a now-discontinued gasoline additive that in sufficient amounts can make water smell and taste like kerosene. The amounts detected so far, up to 5 parts per billion, are far below the federal taste-and-odor guideline of 20 to 40 parts per billion. "The levels we've found are well within the limits established, but that doesn't necessarily give me confidence," Selectboard member Andrea Morgante said this month. "In the back of our minds, we know we should be looking for an alternative source of water." Hinesburg's MTBE problem comes from underground gasoline storage tanks removed long ago from Lantman's store in the village center. Lantman's is

one of the many general stores and service stations on Vermont's hazardous sites list as a result of decades-old leaks. (Like a number of property owners with contaminated sites, store owner Brian Busier declined to discuss the problem. The tanks were not owned by the store, but by S. B. Collins Inc., the St. Albans fuel distributor that supplied gasoline to Lantman's. The fuel company did not respond to a request for comment). Underground storage tanks were a common source of leaking gasoline before a state campaign to have old tanks removed and replaced with more leak-proof ones in the 1990s. The case of the Lantman's leak offers a lesson in the lingering complications of petroleum pollution. When the underground tanks — holding 2,000 gallons, 3,000 gallons and 6,000 gallons, respectively — were pulled out in April 1996, they appeared to be in good condition, though workers found petroleum floating on the groundwater around them. Experts did not worry initially that petroleum in the soil would migrate to pollute water in the nine supply wells within 1,000 feet of Lantman's. "The threat of site contamination reaching the bedrock aquifer tapped by the supply wells appears relatively low, based on the thickness and relatively low permeability" of the soils, a consultant wrote to the Waste Management Division in 1996. But in 1999, tests revealed MTBE in a well at the Saputo cheese company down the road. The source was tracked several years later to Lantman's. Further studies showed that MTBE, which is highly soluble in water, had indeed reached groundwater in the

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bedrock, migrating through cracks to penetrate deep into the earth. Most of the testing and remedial work has been paid from the state's Petroleum Cleanup Fund, at a cost through 2010 of nearly \$400,000.

### Serendipitous Solution

A serendipitous solution to the pollution worked for a while: Saputo's cheesemaking operation used a lot of water: 50,000 gallons a day were pumped from the well and run through carbon filters to remove MTBE before the water was used. Then in September 2008, a fire shut down Saputo's plant, and the company decided not to rebuild. Its well stopped pumping. Two months later, MTBE was detected for the first time in Hinesburg's two drinking-water wells, just a short distance from Lantman's store and the defunct Saputo plant. "So much water was being pulled out by Saputo that it was de-watering the shallow aquifer above the bedrock — close to sucking it dry," said Matt Moran, the environmental analyst who handles the Hinesburg case for the Waste Management Division. Once Saputo stopped pumping, groundwater levels rebounded as much as 30 feet, according to Steven LaRosa, senior project manager at Heindel and Noyes, a Burlington environmental consulting company handling the Hinesburg pollution problem. That created several issues. Among them: • The Saputo well had been intercepting the MTBE before it could reach the town wells. • The higher groundwater levels complicated attempts to remove the gasoline still soaking the soil deep beneath the Lantman's site. The most efficient way to remove petroleum from underground soils is to use a powerful vacuum pump to pull air through the contamination. Gasoline is a volatile collection of compounds, many of which evaporate and are captured by the air's being withdrawn. This so-called "multiphase extraction system" has been installed at Lantman's Aboveground, the air is put through a kind of incinerator that burns the gasoline compounds. In the three years the extraction system has been running, it has pulled out 94 gallons of hydrocarbons, LaRosa said. But that system doesn't work if the soil is saturated with water, so Heindel and Noyes is running a second system at the site, pumping out groundwater to de-water the underground soils enough so air will circulate through them. "Our hope is we can get the Saputo well back on line and use it as the point to recover MTBE," LaRosa said.

### How to 'Assure Good Water'

Hinesburg town government notified water users of the low-level MTBE contamination soon after it was discovered. The town is working with Heindel and Noyes on a contingency plan to treat the water if MTBE levels rise to 10 parts per billion — still well below the federal guideline for taste and odor. "Yes, there is a chance the levels will increase," LaRosa said. "It appears to have leveled out, but whether it is going to stay that way, we're just not sure." The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has said there is insufficient data to assess the health risks of low levels of MTBE in drinking water, but adds, "there is little likelihood that MTBE in drinking water will cause adverse health effects at concentrations between 20 and 40 parts per billion or below." "Do we have concerns? Obviously there shouldn't be any MTBE in the water," said Rocky Martin, the town's director of buildings and facilities. An additional concern is that other gasoline compounds, ones with known health effects, could follow MTBE into the town wells. TBE is the most mobile compound in gasoline. Benzene, a human carcinogen, is the next most mobile. "I would have expected to see benzene by now, but that doesn't mean it isn't on its way," LaRosa said. State regulators have been talking with the new owners of the Saputo site about the possibility of restarting the former Saputo well. "I haven't heard any questions from residents; I've been somewhat surprised," said Morgante, the Selectboard member. "We all realize that it is a situation that needs to be monitored. We are relying on support from the state. We want to collaborate on a solution to assure good water."

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/article/20110313/LIVING09/103130303/Gas-leak-pollutes-Hinesburg-town-wells>

## PERU, LIMA, MARCH 14 2011. REPORT REVEALS OVER 90 OIL SPILLS IN PERUVIAN AMAZON IN THE LAST 3 YEARS



*The crude from the July 29 2010 spill flows down the stream into the river.*

This report by the Federation of Indigenous Communities of the Corrientes River (FECONACO) and Peruvian NGO Shinai documents the ongoing impacts of oil drilling in Oil Blocks 1-AB and 8 in the Northern Peruvian Amazon. A team of monitors from the indigenous Achuar and Urarina communities on the Corrientes River documented 18 major crude oil spills in 2010 and over 90 spills over the last three years, directly affecting dozens of miles of rivers and streams and vast stretches of forest. Blocks 1-AB and 8 are currently operated by Argentine company Pluspetrol. Block 1-AB was operated by Los Angeles-based Occidental Petroleum (Oxy) from 1971 to 2000 and is the subject of [ongoing litigation](#) by communities alleging the company severely contaminated the environment for nearly 30 years. An

[independent study by consultancy E-Tech International](#) also identified serious failures in the clean-up of contaminated sites left

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by Oxy when they sold Block 1-AB to Pluspetrol over a decade ago. The community monitors also identified over 90 legacy contamination sites left by Oxy's operations that are not within the clean-up plan agreed upon with Pluspetrol as part of the Block's sale.

<http://www.hispanicallyspeakingnews.com/notitas-de-noticias/details/report-reveals-over-90-oil-spills-in-peruvian-amazon-in-the-last-3-years/5876/>

### USA, VT, BURLINGTON, MARCH 14 2011. PETROLEUM SPILLS ATTRACT FEW HEADLINES, BUT LEAVE BEHIND POLLUTED INDOOR AIR, CONTAMINATED WATER AND DISRUPTED LIVES

candace page



*Mary Dillon with the monitoring well behind her home in Richmond on Friday, March 11, 2011.*

"No heat!" she recalled. Her 275-gallon tank had been filled in January, but just three weeks later on a frigid February evening, her serviceman found it empty. Daylight revealed the trouble: a tiny hole in the bottom of the tank and the stain of bright-pink-dyed kerosene in the snow beneath. After four weeks, \$10,000 and the excavation of 50 tons of frozen, contaminated dirt, Dillon still does not know for certain that the cleanup is complete. Her blue-shuttered trailer even could end up on the state's list of hazardous sites. That list is a long one. In January, the nonprofit Toxics Action Center published a town-by-town list that identified 1,421 hazardous sites in Vermont. While

the phrase "hazardous waste sites" conjures pictures of multi-acre Superfund properties like Burlington's Pine Street Barge Canal, Vermont has relatively few such industrial polluters. Instead, 90 percent or more of the places on the state's hazardous-sites list are the result of spills and leaks of gasoline, kerosene and home heating oil at service stations, mom-and-pop general stores, small businesses and individual homes. Many of those sites are at risk of polluting groundwater, surface water or indoor air at homes and businesses. Gasoline spills or leaks have polluted nearly 1,000 public and private drinking water wells since 1987. Home-heating-oil spills release fumes that can cause nausea, headaches and dizziness, driving people from their homes until the oil is removed. The effect of petroleum pollution on individuals can be devastating: • "I lost my home," said Fred Watkins. The house in Proctor he shared with his former wife was demolished in 2010 after a 275-gallon heating-oil tank overturned on the dirt floor of the basement. Chemicals evaporating from the oil made the air inside the house sickening to breathe. Contractors found it impossible to remove the saturated soil while the house was standing.

- Parishioners of the United Reformed Church of New Haven temporarily have lost the use of their church on U.S. 7 after hundreds of gallons of kerosene spilled down walls and across floors from an attic furnace in February.
- Eighteen years after a leaking underground gasoline storage tank was removed from the property of a Killington hotel, neighbor John Cook still cannot drink water from his well without treating it to remove contaminants. The state and an insurer have spent nearly \$2 million on monitoring, cleanup and water treatment for homes in the area.

Vermont has catalogued 3,500 petroleum spills and leaks since the Agency of Natural Resources began tracking them in 1988. Today, there are 1,200 active petroleum-contaminated sites on the list. In cases such as the Killington hotel, pollution has persisted for decades. "Petroleum affects a small number of people at each spill, but when you look at the sheer number of spills, it adds up to a large number of people," said Chuck Schwer, head of the state's hazardous waste sites program. Cleaning up the contamination doesn't come cheap: The state has spent more than \$110 million in 23 years, most of the money from a special Petroleum Cleanup Fund fed by taxes and fees on petroleum fuels. Some years, the fund runs short of money to carry out all the work that needs to be done.

#### **Don't Take a Shower, Your Water Could Explode**

Leaking underground gasoline storage tanks at Vermont filling stations and general stores were identified as a serious problem in the 1980s. Old single-walled tanks corroded over time and leaked some of their contents into the surrounding soil. The state set a 1998 deadline for removal of unprotected tanks and established standards for new storage tanks, most of which are double-walled to prevent leaks. Lawmakers also created the Petroleum Cleanup Fund to cover most of the associated costs. That money pays for digging up and disposing of gasoline-laced soil; for vapor extraction systems that remove gasoline from soil; for pumping contaminated water from the ground; for monitoring wells and water testing; for providing neighbors with water-treatment systems or bottled water. Sometimes, neighbors must be compensated for reduced property values: The owner of a Rutland office building received more than \$330,000 from the fund last year in the wake of pollution at a gas station next door. Some gasoline leaks are limited to soil around tanks, but in other cases, petroleum has

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followed fractures in the bedrock, penetrating deep into the earth. Some of the compounds in gasoline can travel hundreds or thousands of feet in groundwater. A spill from an overturned gasoline tanker in 1997, for example, polluted 41 wells in Hartland. The results of many fuel leaks can last for years. In Burlington, an environmental management firm continues to bail petroleum from monitoring wells near Simon's Downtown Quick Stop on South Winooski Avenue, 15 years after two gasoline tanks and a fuel-oil tank were removed from the ground. As of August 2010, the firm had recovered 441 gallons of petroleum by bailing the wells every week since 2007. Perhaps the most expensive case to date is that of Summit Lodge, a hotel just north of the Killington ski area. John Cook, an environmental engineer from East Greenwich, R.I., bought land in a development near the hotel with his brother and a cousin in 1993. They began constructing a duplex vacation home and drilled a well 350 feet deep. The liquid that came out stank of petroleum. Cook took a sample to a lab for analysis. "Oh, my God. There were very, very high concentrations of gasoline," he said last week. "They said there was so much gasoline that if you were showering and someone was smoking in the same room, there could be an explosion." The source of the pollution was tracked to a leaking 275-gallon underground gasoline tank at Summit Lodge where the gasoline had penetrated bedrock. In the following years, the state monitored about 80 drinking water wells in the vicinity, Schwer said, and found gasoline compounds in about half. Among the chemicals found in Cook's well were benzene, a carcinogen, and methyl-tertiary-butyl-ether or MTBE, a now-discontinued gasoline additive that is highly soluble and thus spreads quickly through groundwater. Today, a treatment system strips gasoline from the water in Cook's well so that it can be used by the household. The Petroleum Cleanup Fund provides bottled water for drinking, just in case the treatment systems malfunction. Sampling last fall showed that gasoline compounds continue to contaminate nine other wells in the vicinity. "Once gasoline gets into the bedrock aquifer, it is very difficult to get out," Schwer said, "We have done everything we can, and the contamination is still there."

#### **Oil Spilled, a House Lost**

Home heating oil leaks and spills are less likely to contaminate groundwater, in part because the compounds in it are less soluble than those in gasoline. Heating-oil spills pose a hazard when fumes enter a house, a particular concern when the spill is in the basement or living area. Watkins, the Proctor man whose home was demolished because of a spill, said his settlement with his oil company barred him from discussing what happened. "They couldn't have lived there," Schwer, the state program director, said, recalling the spill that sent fumes through the house. "I got a headache after just a half hour in there." Contractors dug 17 tons of oil-soaked soil from Watkins' basement, but the petroleum had traveled under and through the foundation and substantial contamination remained. In the end, Cobalt Properties, a subsidiary of Irving Oil Corp., Watkins' fuel dealer, bought the home and paid the cleanup costs, according to documents filed with the state. "They knocked down the house, then went in with a backhoe and dug it all up," Schwer recalled. In all, 418 tons of oil-laced soil was dug up and trucked away for disposal. If the Watkins house is an extreme example, the house at 44 Overlake Park in Burlington illustrates the headaches that come with much smaller fuel oil leaks. A young couple with a new baby purchased the house in 2005. They smelled a faint, persistent petroleum odor. Tests over several months detected trace amounts of volatile organic compounds, gases that can have many sources but in this case were traced to the basement's concrete floor, where fuel oil once had leaked. After trying a number of solutions, the couple — who have since moved to California and declined to be interviewed — temporarily moved out of the house while the basement slab was broken up with jackhammers, and 4.5 tons of concrete and soil were removed, a vapor barrier was installed and new concrete floor poured. Cost to the Petroleum Cleanup Fund: \$15,000. The lesson, state regulators and fuel industry experts said, is that homeowners need to make sure their heating-oil tanks are installed and maintained properly. "It's common sense. You wouldn't run your car for 100,000 miles without taking it into the shop," said Matt Cota, executive director of the Vermont Fuel Dealers Association. "You should have your home heating tank and fuel lines inspected every year, or every two years at most."

#### **A Problem, Unabated**

Although Vermont service stations have replaced their old tanks, 109 new petroleum-polluted sites were identified in 2010. In the past 10 years, new spills from above-ground home-heating-oil tanks have averaged 60 a year. At dozens of older sites, active cleanup and monitoring continues. Lawmakers last year increased the cleanup-fund tax on home heating oil from half a cent to 1 cent, to refill the depleted heating-oil-cleanup account from which they had siphoned money to help balance the state's General Fund budget. If the petroleum-cleanup program has detractors, it is homeowners whose houses have remained on the hazardous-sites list beyond what the owners think is reasonable. Some sites stay on the list as high- or medium-priority sites because their owners have not responded to the state's prodding to clean up. Schwer, head of the hazardous waste sites program, acknowledged there have been cases where sites have not been reclassified or removed from the list when they should, although he said such an occurrence is rare. When property owners don't respond to requests to have contamination cleaned up, the Waste Management Division's alternative is to recommend enforcement action. "It's illegal to release hazardous materials. If you do you must report it and clean it up. We have good powers, but there are only so

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many attorneys in the department," he said, referring to the Environmental Conservation Department. Usually petroleum-contamination cases don't make the enforcement priority list, he said.

#### 'It Keeps You Up'

Dillon, the Richmond homeowner coping with a new kerosene leak, is pleased with the cleanup programs. She praised the advice and assistance she received from Schwer's office and said she "heaved a huge sigh of relief" when she learned the cleanup fund will cover almost all the costs of handling the unknown number of gallons of kerosene soaked into her backyard. Nevertheless, she said the spill, the subsequent excavations and the disruption of her daily life have been hard. "It is pretty devastating," she said. "It is pretty devastating." She sat at the dining table in her immaculate kitchen, her cat, Shadow, providing company. Outside, her formerly neat back lawn was a waste of bulldozed earth and dirty snow. "I don't have a yard anymore," she said. Despite the state's financial assistance, she expects the kerosene spill to eat a hole in her pocket. She said she is likely to postpone her plans for new kitchen linoleum and living-room carpet this year. "It keeps you up at night," she said of the days following the spill.

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/article/20110313/LIVING09/103130301/1007/Special-Report-Toxic-Spills-Hit-Home>

#### CANADA, ONT, TILLSONBURG, MARCH 16 2011. FIRE DOUSED QUICKLY ON TRAIN HAULING ETHANOL GAS

*michael peeling*

**Watch the Video:** <http://www.tillsonburgnews.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=3028354>

The swift actions of an engineer and firefighters averted a potentially devastating explosion north of Tillsonburg when smoke started pouring from a train pulling seven tanker cars of ethanol gas. According to Oxford County OPP Const. Dennis Harwood, it was around 4:45 p.m. on Tuesday when the engineer of the train brought it to a halt just short of Ostrander Road and a short distance east of Highway 19. He saw smoke coming out of doors on the side of the large yellow engine. The engineer attempted to put out what appeared to be a fire with extinguishers to no avail on the Ontario Southland railway system. He called 911, which brought at least a dozen Southwest Oxford Township firefighters from Brownsville and a similar number of OPP officers, some of whom blocked off access to Ostrander Road from Highway 19 to Cranberry Line. "When the officers and firefighters from Brownsville arrived on scene, they found there was some problem in the engine that was causing some smoke," Harwood said. "The Brownsville fire department dealt with the situation very quickly. At the same time, the seven tanks of ethanol were disconnected from the engine and allowed to roll down the tracks 50 feet and then secured to get them away from the engine." Harwood said there was never any danger of the ethanol exploding. "Certainly officers were developing contingency plans to deal with any bigger situation, but fortunately one never arose," Harwood said. "They were able to keep it contained to the engine compartment." The damaged train was to be towed by another engine to a nearby yard in Salford. Ontario Southland president Jeff Willsie said it was a bearing that failed in the engine and caused a small fire. The problem bearing isn't an uncommon incident, according to Willsie. "Oh it happens," he said. "It's not super common." Willsie said there are trains rolling around carrying substances "much nastier than ethanol." Based on his 35 years of experience working in the rail business, Willsie said one of the 20,000-gallon tanker cars holding the ethanol can withstand a 60-mile per hour impact with another train. Willsie said it won't cost much to get the train running again.

<http://www.tillsonburgnews.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=3028354>

#### CANADA, B.C, VANCOUVER, MARCH 16 2011. CN FINED \$75,000 FOR SPILL



*Area of a diesel spill in 2009.*

A fine of \$75,000 has been levied against the Canadian National Railway (CN) for a diesel spill in North Surrey's Thornton Yard two years ago. CN learned of the leak at about 2:30 p.m. on March 5, 2009, and had the fuel turned off within an hour. By then, however, much of the diesel had spilled into the salmon bearing Fraser River. CN notified provincial and federal authorities. Last Friday, the company was ordered to pay \$75,000 for introducing a deleterious substance into waters frequented by fish. A total of \$70,000 of those penalties is being directed to projects related to the conservation and protection of fish and fish habitat in the waters of the Fraser River and its tributaries.

[http://www.bcclocalnews.com/surrey\\_area/cloverdalereporter/business/118042424.html](http://www.bcclocalnews.com/surrey_area/cloverdalereporter/business/118042424.html)

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### USA, CA, BAKERSFIELD, MARCH 17 2011. FIREFIGHTERS RESCUE UNCONSCIOUS MAN FROM TRUCK TANKER

Watch the Video <http://www.bakersfieldnow.com/news/local/118134594.html?tab=video>

Photo Gallery <http://www.bakersfieldnow.com/news/local/118134594.html?tab=gallery>



Kern County firefighters rescued an unconscious man from inside a truck tanker Wednesday afternoon. The worker, who wasn't identified, was cleaning a trailer carrying residual crude oil when he lost consciousness. A coworker at the Golden State Highway and Knudsen Drive site found the man and apparently called 911. Emergency crews found high levels of flammable vapors and low levels of oxygen inside the tanker. They worked to improve the air quality inside the tanker and then helped the man, who had regained consciousness, out of the tanker. The man was decontaminated, evaluated and taken to an area hospital.

<http://www.bakersfieldnow.com/news/local/118134594.html>

### VENEZUELA, FALCÓN STATE, PARAGUANÁ, MARCH 17 2011. EXPLOSION ROCKS TOP VENEZUELA REFINERY, SLOWS OUTPUT

sailu urribarri



The 335,000 barrel per day (bpd) refinery was completely shut down between March and August 2010.

An explosion shook Venezuela's largest refinery Amuay on Tuesday, slowing but not totally halting operations at the 645,000 barrel-per-day facility as workers fought the blaze. State oil company PDVSA said a fire, which began just before dawn after the explosion, was out by 10 am (2:30 p.m. British time) and had not caused any injuries. Officials said the explosion was in a furnace in the hydrodesulfurization unit 4 (HD4). A source at the refinery said its 104,000 bpd catalytic cracker diesel and gasoline unit had to reduce its load and would stay like that for several days during repair work. He could not give further details. Exports from South America's top oil producer have dropped in recent years, in part because refineries and upgraders that turn its tar-like Orinoco crude into exportable

oil have suffered numerous accidents and planned stoppages. The cracker was not damaged in the blast. Residents of villages near the site said the ground shook with the force of the blast on the northwestern Paraguana peninsula where the refinery is located along with its sister operation Cardon in one of the world's largest refinery complexes. Venezuelan newspaper EL Mundo said windows broke in houses in the area from the force of the blast. "We thought it was an earthquake, but then we saw the flames which were at least 5 meters (16 feet) high," local resident Herbert Vivas told Reuters. By 9 am (1330 GMT) the flames could no longer be seen from outside the refinery, witnesses said. "PDVSA guarantees the fulfilment of its commitments, both in the national and international market," the company added in its statement. A fire at a Cardon dock last year caused shipping to be halted for four days and followed another massive blaze at a PDVSA fuel terminal on the nearby island of Bonaire. Four units at the 335,000 bpd Isla refinery run by PDVSA on the Caribbean island of Curacao have been paralyzed since last week

<http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFTRE72E6A920110315>

### USA, CA, BAKERSFIELD, MARCH 17 2011. HONDO CHEMICAL GETS ANOTHER CHANCE TO CLEAN UP

james burger

Watch the Video:

<http://www.kget.com/news/local/story/Troubled-chemical-plant-can-remain-open-for-now/e9enlEpwbk-6MfsnDAeNeA.csp>

Jess Karr has more time to clean up his act at the troubled Hondo Chemical facility on Stockdale Highway. Karr had to produce hazardous materials test results by Tuesday or -- Kern County supervisors had promised him -- they would close Hondo down. He delivered the results and made progress in cleaning up serious material handling violations at the facility,

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which processes chemicals for use in the agricultural industry. But county regulators told supervisors Karr still has a lot of work left to do -- including disposing of at least 30,000 tons of fly ash, a caustic alkaline powder produced as a by-product of refineries, and correcting serious fire safety violations which could land him in criminal court. Supervisors ordered Karr to clean up the remaining violations and install a fire suppression system before April 12. And, they said, all the fly ash on the site must be gone within two years.

#### Reprive

In February supervisors told Karr he faced closure unless he could produce test results from three water-sampling wells on his property by Tuesday. County officials worried that Karr's lax handling of hazardous and semi-hazardous waste had threatened water quality in the nearby Kern County Water Bank. On Tuesday, Public Health Director Matt Constantine told supervisors the wells had tested negative for hazardous materials. Supervisors generally congratulated Karr on the progress he's been able to make in the past few weeks. "It is very good news for our community that the water is not contaminated," said Supervisor Mike Maggard. But they remain concerned about on-going violations and expressed concern that, given the troubled history of Hondo Chemical, such positive progress wouldn't continue. Supervisor Ray Watson asked if there might be contamination in the soil waiting to be released if the water table rises. Constantine said there is no way to be sure, but more than 30 soil borings have not indicated the presence of contamination. Karr got kudos from Constantine for taking aggressive steps to fix a legion of material safety violations Kern County Environmental Health inspectors found last month when they toured the facility after a major sulphur fire sent a plume of potentially toxic smoke into the west Bakersfield sky. He cleaned up piles of corroding bags of chemicals by emptying them into plastic-lined bins and cleared piles of refuse from concrete basins that were designed to catch spilled chemicals. But Constantine told supervisors there are still violations that Karr has not cleaned up. And Deputy Fire Chief Brian Marshall said if serious fire safety concerns are not addressed by the end of March, the Kern County Fire Department could file a criminal complaint against Hondo with the Kern County District Attorney.

#### Another Step, Long Road

Supervisors declared the fly ash on the site a public nuisance in 2007 and levied a \$1,000 penalty on Hondo for every day the material is not cleaned up. Currently, the penalty sits at \$1.23 million. Constantine said Karr has removed only half of the material he had stockpiled at Hondo in 2007. The slow pace is largely because Karr has been trying to sell the material to farmers as a soil-improvement product. Constantine said the county isn't quite sure how much of the material is actually at Hondo. Karr moves it around a great deal and they are uncertain if some of the fly ash has been buried, said Engineering, Survey and Permit Services Director Chuck Lackey. To overcome the uncertainty, supervisors on Tuesday gave Karr a two-year deadline to clean up the ash.

#### Fire Problems

February's blaze added a mass of additional problems after fire inspectors found stripped wiring, jury-rigged electrical systems and inadequate fire suppression systems and environmental health inspectors found unlabeled chemicals kept improperly in unsafe containers at multiple locations across the property, classifying Hondo as "an accident waiting to happen." The most serious problems for Karr, now, are the fire safety violations. In February Karr told supervisors that small sulphur fires occur at Hondo on a regular basis as heavy equipment moves sulphur around on a concrete mixing-pad. "We have that condition quite a bit and we just dash it out with a 5-gallon bucket of water," Karr said then. County fire officials said the fire suppression systems at Hondo are inadequate. Larry Moxley, a consultant hired Monday to represent Karr, said there has been progress in getting on-site access to the amount of water required to fight a fire at the location. But Karr must submit plans for a comprehensive fire suppression system within the next 15 days, Marshall said. And supervisors said the system must be installed and certified by their April 12 meeting.

<http://www.bakersfield.com/news/local/x233128771/Hondo-Chemical-gets-another-chance-to-clean-up>

#### USA, CA, TEHACHAPI, MARCH 17 2011. WHAT THE LETTERS AND NUMBERS ON RAILCARS MEAN

*ed gordon*

What do all those letters and numbers mean on the side of a railroad car? The grouping of numbers and letters are a condensed form of the owners name, a series of numbers, weight load limit and capacity information. This "data" on the freight cars is also used to keep track of them. The car owners name in short form and the car number help account for the unit. An "X" in the initials indicates that the car is privately owned. Letters representing the unloaded weight of the car are LT WT followed by a number in pounds. LD.LM indicates the maximum load limit on the car. The average capacity of the car is identified by CAPY. BLT shows the date the car was constructed and NEW indicates the first time the car was weighed. There are six basic types of freight cars in use today. Box cars—an American invention dating back to the 1830s—identifiers begin with "X" flatcars are identified with an "F" gondolas with a "G", hoppers with "H", refrigerator cars with "R" and tank cars with

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"T". The additional letters after the first designator define the specific use for that car. XM for example indicates a general use box car, while XME indicates a wood lined car for general merchandise with fixtures to secure the load, and XI indicates an insulated car. Flatcars were the first type of car used in America in the 1820s and have remained in extensive use through today. Flat cars are used to carry freight that is too heavy, long, tall or wide for box cars. 'LP' bulkhead flatcars are used for transporting products such as pulpwood. Gondola cars started out as flat cars with sides added to help keep the loads of loose material confined. They are primarily used to ship bulk items like scrap metal or coal. The cars are emptied by the ends dropping down, a bottom that opens or the car being turned over and dumped. Hoppers appeared in the 1830's and come in covered and uncovered versions. They started to be come highly used in the 1970's when jumbo hoppers were developed that could carry more than gondolas. Hopper are generally used to carry grain, rock and cement. The cars are identified as "HM" two bays, "HT" three bays, "HD" twin dump and "LO" covered. Refrigerator cars or refers as they are more commonly known are identified with "RB" for insulated throughout and "RBL" for having the ability to secure the load. The designations "RS" and "RSB" are generally not seen today as they indicate the use of ice to cool the car. Cars designated "RSM" indicate they have rails to hang meat. Tank Cars are used for oil, chemicals, corn oil and similar liquid products. They have two general designations, "TA" for standard tank car and "TG" for glass lined cars. Now you can not only count the cars you can tell what they're used for and what may be inside. Go out and see how many cars you can identify with these markings. A lot of train buffs like to log the different cars they see as they travel across the country and watch for them to show up again in another train. Ed Gordon is a freelance writer. He lives in Tehachapi and with his wife, Linda, is the owner of Trains, etc., located at 114 W. Tehachapi Blvd., Tehachapi.

<http://www.tehachapinews.com/content/what-letters-and-numbers-railcars-mean/33821>

#### USA, CA, LOS ANGELES, CARSON, MARCH 17 2011. WATER QUALITY BOARD ORDERS SHELL TO CLEAN SOIL AT CAROUSEL TRACT IN CARSON



Shell Oil Co. has been slapped with a final order to clean all the surface soil at the 44-acre Carousel tract housing development in Carson. The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board order, released Monday, requires Shell to submit a work plan within two months for how the company will clean the top 10 feet of soil across the entire site, which sits on a former oil tank farm. The massive cleanup could begin as soon as this summer, according to Water Quality Control Board officials who are overseeing the project. Residents will be relocated during the remediation. "We don't want to wait until 10 years from now to find out that not doing the most stringent cleanup resulted in health risks," said Fran Diamond, chair of the water board. "The data may not all be there now but it's important to us to know we're doing this to the best of our ability." The Carousel tract - 285 single-family homes north of Lomita Boulevard between Marabella and Panama avenues - was found to have elevated levels of cancer-causing chemicals during routine testing in 2007. Since then, a tedious process of testing and planning for cleanup has been unfolding. The water board estimated the health risk to residents was slightly above

acceptable levels and ordered Shell to make the area suitable for residential living. The area was contaminated from 1924 to 1966, when it was used as a Shell Oil tank farm that stored crude oil in reservoirs. Most of the area residents are now suing Shell Oil Co. for alleged declines in home values and physical injury. Some residents believe they have leukemia as a result of benzene and other hydrocarbons in the soil. Tom Girardi of Girardi & Keese, the law firm representing residents, said he is pleased with the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board's order. "We think that the water board was able to look at the massive expert opinions we provided, and clearly they are of the view that the people have to be protected," Girardi said. "When Shell Oil Co. tells people not to let their children dig in the backyard, maybe something should be done about it. And they've decided to do something about it." Shell Oil Co. spokeswoman Alison Abbott Chassin said the company will continue to work with environmental regulators. "We remain committed to the environmental investigation," she said. "Our priority is the health and safety of the community. We understand the importance of completing testing in a timely manner and sharing the data with the water board and all the agencies involved." A 30-day public comment period has begun as the water board seeks input on the order. The current order does not preclude future additional orders to clean groundwater and deeper soil, water board officials said. "We hope that we can look forward to a time in the not-too-distant future where people feel the soil has been cleaned and they know we've done our best, and they feel their property has been protected and - most of all - their health," Diamond said.

[http://www.presstelegram.com/news/ci\\_17612147](http://www.presstelegram.com/news/ci_17612147)

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#### USA, AK, ANIAK, MARCH 17 2011. VILLAGE FUEL SPILL LESS THAN FIRST DETERMINED

A fuel spill at a tank farm near the Western Alaska village of Aniak wasn't as big as originally reported, the state Department of Environmental Conservation said Tuesday in its final report on the incident. Less than 7,000 gallons spilled, compared with an initial estimate of 23,000 gallons, the department said. The tank farm is owned by Crowley Marine Services Inc. and operated by Crowley Petroleum Distribution Inc., according to a company spokesman. Crowley initially overestimated the size of the spill because a worker read a gauge wrong, according to DEC. The spill was caused when a worker failed to fully close a fuel tank valve, and another valve on a fuel line failed at the same time, DEC said. The spill was contained within a lined area at the tank farm. Crowley hired contractors to clean it up.

<http://www.adn.com/2011/03/16/1759680/village-fuel-spill-less-than-first.html>

#### CHINA, HENAN PROVINCE, SHANGCAI CO, DANGDIAN, MARCH 17 2011. FAMILY OWNED FIREWORKS PLANT EXPLODES IN CENTRAL CHINA VILLAGE

A family owned fireworks plant exploded Wednesday noon in a central China county, local authorities told Xinhua. The explosion occurred at 12:30 p.m. in Dangdian Village in Dangdian Town in Shangcai County, in central China's Henan Province, said an official of the provincial administration of work safety. The number of casualties is still unknown, and an investigation into the cause of the accident is underway, the official said.

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/7322452.html>

#### USA, ORE, PORTLAND, MARCH 17 2011. UNTOLD OIL LEAKS LURK >> AS HOME SALES SAG AND CLEANUP COSTS JUMP, FEWER OIL TANKS ARE REMOVED

*peter korn*



*Workers at Dana Thompson Tanks and Soil remove a large residential oil tank that was leaking contaminants into the soil. Thousands of old oil tanks in the Portland area are leaking diesel fuel.*

About 1,200 leaking home oil tanks were discovered last year in Oregon – the great majority in the Portland metro area. But what really worries Bruce Gilles, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality cleanup manager, are the leaking tanks that aren't being discovered. Before the economic downturn, hundreds more leaking tanks were being discovered and decommissioned each year. Gilles is concerned that fewer people are looking, afraid to discover that they have a major backyard pollution problem when they don't have the money to fix it. Most people don't consider decommissioning their old tanks until they sell their homes, Gilles says.

Realtors representing home buyers often won't recommend clients purchase a home until the tank is at least tested for leaks, and more likely, decommissioned. A home's sale can provide the money to fix the problem. But with home sales down, fewer people are removing tanks. And the cost of tank removal and testing escalated in 2009, when the federal Environmental Protection Agency changed its policies and declared naphthalene and ethyl benzene, both present in home fuel oil, to be carcinogens. As a result, Oregon DEQ required that cleanup of leaking home oil tanks include a series of tests to determine whether leaked oil created vapor intrusions of the cancer-causing chemicals into homes. Cleanup became costlier – sometimes twice as expensive – if an oil leak is discovered. So an unintended consequence of the stricter standards might have been to scare off even more homeowners with old oil tanks in their yards, convincing themselves that it's better not to look.

#### Backyard Perils

There are thousands of old oil tanks throughout the Portland area, possibly over 100,000, that are leaking diesel fuel into the ground. Nobody is required to find these tanks and plug up the leaks. And nobody's quite sure how to estimate the environmental danger of having these thousands of small oil leaks. Yet it's clear, city engineers say, that some of the oil is making its way into creeks, rivers and streams. Some of the leaks also are making their way into homes, in the form of poisonous fumes. Buried oil tanks represent a classic out-of-sight, out-of-mind conundrum. Not to mention out of regulation. Residential home heating tanks are unregulated. Nobody checks on the old ones to see if they're leaking. And, due to state budget cutbacks, even those reported as leaking aren't inspected to see if they've been replaced, or if the leaks contaminated water sources. "Nobody thinks their tank is leaking," says Dana Thompson, owner of Dana Thompson Tanks and Soil in Southeast Portland. Thompson's company decommissions old tanks, empties them of oil when they're no longer needed, digs them up from the ground when necessary, and removes contaminated soil from around the ones that have leaked. Though he

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has a financial stake in the matter, Thompson worries about people ignoring their old oil tanks, because the costs – and potential pollution – can worsen through neglect over the years. He says the life expectancy of most of the buried tanks in Portland is 15 to 20 years, and most were installed more than 50 years ago.

#### Procrastination Can Be Costly

Thompson's crews find leaks in about eight out of every 10 tanks they inspect. Most of those oil leaks are small, and the oil never travels beyond the soil around the tank. But some are much worse. "I've noticed a dramatic increase in the number of catastrophic releases of heating oil at residential sites," Thompson says. "It's growing." Four or five years ago, out of every 100 residential oil tanks his company inspected, two or three had major leaks. But those tanks are getting older, and some are getting stressed as they repeatedly get filled with oil. Today, Thompson's crews find major leaks in about seven to 10 out of every 100. Two years ago, Thompson's firm was called in to inspect a tank in Irvington that had no visible above-ground signs of leaking. But the underground leaks had been so severe that crews had to haul off soil saturated with an estimated 800 gallons of oil. They couldn't remove all the contaminated soil, Thompson says, because it had saturated too deeply, but he estimates another 800 to 1,000 gallons of oil were left in the ground around the home. Even with the contaminated soil left in place, the site passed the state risk- assessment criteria. More recently, Thompson's crew was called in to inspect a tank of an elderly Salem woman. In the 1960s, the woman and her husband built a home addition over their backyard tank, which was no longer in use. But the old oil had never been pumped out of that tank. Eventually, water infiltrated the tank and the tank overflowed, carrying oil and water into the crawl space of the woman's home. Diesel vapors began wafting up into the rest of the house. The woman had to leave while crews hauled out soil, and they recommended that the room built over the tank be completely removed. Thompson says people need to consider the financial risk of waiting to have a tank inspected. It takes about \$1,000 to decommission a tank with no leaks, he says. But if oil is leaking, the price tag goes way up, to anywhere between \$2,300 to \$20,000, depending on how much diesel-saturated soil has to be trucked out. The time to decommission an unused tank, Thompson says, is before it leaks. Some homeowners, when given an expensive estimate for their work, simply choose to pump out the remaining oil in their leaking tanks and leave the tanks and saturated soil in place, Thompson says. They know DEQ doesn't have the manpower to inspect their site. But leaving oil in the ground around the house is never a good idea, Thompson says. "If that stuff spreads and goes under the house, maybe in years to come it might become a vapor risk," he says. A vapor risk assessment, which is required if significant leaking is found, can add \$2,000 to \$3,000 to the total bill, for something that's "vague as to the real urgency of the health risk," Thompson says. The falling number of tank removals since the recession also hampers DEQ's ability to oversee the oil tank program. That's because the state program is funded by fees when tanks are decommissioned. Gilles once had two technicians to review reports of leaking tanks; now he has just one, for the entire state. To some engineers, Portland's scenic West Hills is known as "hydrocarbon hill," due to the large number of leaking oil tanks. That might sound major alarms in the environmental community, except nobody is certain just how much of a danger that represents. Fuel oil is diesel, which doesn't dissolve as quickly as gasoline. That means it bonds better to soil and leaches into water sources at a slower rate. The two critical factors are the soil where oil is leaked, and the distance between the leak and water sources, says Scott Burns, a Portland State University geologist. Some Portland neighborhoods, such as the central east side, have tight soil which keeps the oil from migrating too far, Burns says. But much of Northwest Portland has sandy or gravelly soil, as does Alameda Ridge, the area around Hawthorne Boulevard, and much of North Portland. In those areas, Burns says, oil will travel away from the leaking tank, "but you don't know where it goes." The worst-case scenario, Burns says, is it makes its way into the water table and then moves laterally into a creek, and eventually into a river. Johnson Creek in Southeast Portland, and wells dug in suburban areas, Burns says, are likely among the most vulnerable water sources. "It's a big concern," says John O'Donovan, a Portland Bureau of Environmental Services engineer. "It impacts the sediment of river bends and creeks and it can go up the food chain." Portland's groundwater can range from one foot underground to over a hundred feet, O'Donovan says. The closer a home is to a river, its more likely the local groundwater is shallow. The bureau maintains hundreds of monitoring wells all over the city, O'Donovan says, and some are showing an inch or more of diesel sitting atop the groundwater. It's clear, he says, that the diesel came from leaking home heating oil tanks. "It tells me maybe it's hit the groundwater and it's traveling," O'Donovan says. "It can basically poison the breeding grounds for fish or poison birds."

#### Cleanups Of Leaking Home Underground Oil Tanks, By County

Tank removals are down since the housing market sank and cleanup standards got tougher

Year	Multnomah	Clackamas	Washington
2005	1,738	236	196
2006	1,365	203	168
2007	1,150	201	160

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2008	958	140	112
2009	833	110	103
2010	797	119	105

Source: Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

[http://www.tigardtimes.com/sustainable/story.php?story\\_id=129990471193625600](http://www.tigardtimes.com/sustainable/story.php?story_id=129990471193625600)

#### CANADA, CALGARY, RAMSAY, MARCH 17 2011. FUEL SPILL IN S.E. CONTAINED



*Fire crews are cleaning up a diesel spill that occurred Wednesday morning in southeast Calgary.*

Officials are investigating after about 200 litres of diesel fuel spilled in southeast Calgary on Wednesday. Ramsay, adjacent to the Lilydale poultry plant, just after 10 a.m. The fuel was pooled around an ice-blocked storm drain near a sanitation sewer, officials said. Hazardous materials specialists isolated the spill and removed the diesel using booms, emulsifiers, suction trucks, and graders. "Some small consolation is that the actual sewer was frozen and so the migration of those hydrocarbons was limited," said fire department spokesman Brian McAsey. The truck that leaked the diesel was later located and its driver informed about the spill.

The truck ran out of fuel near Wetaskiwin, 70 kilometres south of Edmonton, McAsey


said. A small amount of fuel was later recovered from the sanitary sewer. City and provincial officials are looking into what caused the spill.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/story/2011/03/16/calgary-diesel-spill-ramsay.html>

#### USA, KY, OLDHAM CO, MARCH 17 2011. I-71 IN OLDHAM COUNTY REOPENS AFTER SEMI CATCHES FIRE, LEAKS CHEMICALS

matt mccutcheon

 **Watch the Video** <http://www.wave3.com/story/14264678/officials-say-hazmat-incident-downtown-could-be-devastating>

 **Watch the Video** <http://www.wave3.com/story/14260217/hazmat-situation-closes-i-71-in-oldham-county>

 **Photo Gallery** <http://www.wlky.com/slideshow/news-archives/27211243/detail.html>



The southbound lanes of Interstate 71 have reopened after a tractor-trailer caught fire at mile marker 21 near the Pendleton exit early Wednesday morning, forcing HAZMAT crews to respond to the scene and close both lanes for several hours. It all started around 2:30 Wednesday morning. That's when the big rig caught fire after the driver says there was a break problem, at which point he later discovered the fire. The blaze, however, couldn't be treated like regular a fire because of what was inside the semi's trailer. "It was determined to be about 43,000 pounds of a zinc alloy metal," said Officer Justin Flynn with the Oldham County Police Department. That meant HAZMAT crews from Jefferson County had to be called to the Oldham County Fire to extinguish the flames - and not with water. "You can't use regular water on it, so it has to be a dry material," said Officer Justin Flynn with the Oldham County Police Department. Crews had to fight the fire with special dry

chemicals and also use fire extinguishers to battle the blaze. Officials say the fire or the chemicals the truck was carrying posed no health risks to the public living near the scene. Southbound I-71 was immediately closed from mile markers 22-28. The fire was out around 5:30 am, but the cleanup was an even bigger challenge. "We've had some tractor-trailers catch fire in the past, but not to this measure," said Flynn. The southbound lanes were diverted at Pendleton onto Highway 153 North to Highway 42 to the Snyder Freeway. The driver of the truck was taken to the hospital for a separate medical issue. He was on his way to Tennessee with the load of chemicals. All southbound lanes had reopened just before noon.

<http://www.wave3.com/story/14260217/hazmat-situation-closes-i-71-in-oldham-county>

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