



## Dangerous Goods - Hazardous Materials Group & Network

### Release 2012 – 826 Newsy Stuff

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

**April 5 2012**



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#### **ZIMBABWE, MUTARE, MARCH 26 2012. MASSIVE FUEL SCAM UNEARTHED IN MUTARE**

A scam involving the theft of large quantities of fuel has been unearthed in Mutare where a syndicate of corrupt oil companies and customs officials, clearing agents and unregistered service stations are siphoning thousands of litres from oil tankers coming from Beira in Mozambique. On Thursday night, several drivers from different oil companies and buyers stations were caught while siphoning fuel at the Zimra controlled Road Motor Services (RMS) depot in Mutare where all fuel tankers coming from Mozambique park overnight. Sources revealed over 2 000 litres of fuel was recovered while on its way to an unregistered service station owned by a Zanu PF politician. One of the fuel buyers caught in the act, who identified himself as Machiya, said on average they would siphon 800 litres from one tanker. Close to 100 fuel tankers park every night at RMS. Sources told The Standard the illegal activities were taking place right under the nose of customs officials who control the area. He said due to the fuel scam, oil companies could be losing millions of dollars every month. "Complaints have been made but nothing has been done to address the situation because the syndicate involves influential politicians who own most of these backyard garages which are selling fuel at a cheap price," said a source. The biggest fuel importer in the country, Sakunda Energy confirmed that siphoning of fuel was threatening the survival of the industry as established companies were finding it difficult to compete with the unregistered service stations which were offering cheaper prices. Spokesperson for the company, Sarah Manyengawana said such illegal activities caused price distortions on the market especially in centres such as Mutare where most of that stolen fuel ended up being sold \$0,12c cheaper than normal retail prices. She said motorists who buy such fuel also risk contamination of their vehicles "As Sakunda, we will continue to be alert and try to curb such activities so that our operations are not affected. Most of our fuel comes through the pipeline," said Manyengawana. She said some of the affected tankers would be ferrying fuel to countries such as Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. "As for Sakunda, we mostly use the pipeline to import our fuel, but we also use tankers as we have been contracted by other countries to supply fuel," said Manyengawana. Efforts to get a comment from Manicaland province police spokesperson Inspector Leonard Chabata were fruitless as he was said to be writing examinations.

<http://www.thestandard.co.zw/local/34419-massive-fuel-scam-unearthed-in-mutare.html>

#### **PAKISTAN, BHAKKAR, MARCH 29 2012. INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS: FUEL BLASTS LEAVE 2 DEAD, 5 INJURED >> TWO PEOPLE DIED AND AT LEAST FIVE WERE INJURED IN TWO INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS IN MULTAN AND BHAKKAR DISTRICTS ON TUESDAY.**

owais jafri



*Three injured are reported to be in a critical condition.*

In Bhakkar, two men died and two were injured when an oil tanker exploded while it was being welded to repair a leak. Police said Rana Ebaad, the owner of the tanker, had brought it to a welding shop in Adda Jahan after it developed a crack. They said the cargo tank was emptied for repair but some amount of fuel remained inside the tank. The blast occurred when two workers, Shaukat and Raheem, were inside the tank working on the crack. Gas accumulated inside the tank and reacted with the electric current that caused that explosion. Both the workers died on the spot. Ebaad and his son, Yasir, who were standing next to the tank, were also injured. The injured men were taken to the district headquarters hospital. Doctors treating them said that their condition was critical. They said they may be sent to Nishtar Hospital in Multan or to a hospital in Lahore. Another blast occurred at an LPG cylinder refilling shop in Mandi Maweshian in Multan. Three men were critically injured

in the incident. Police said Asghar, who had recently set up the shop, and two passers-by were injured when one of the cylinders at the shop exploded due to gas leak. Some shopkeepers in the market said they had reported the odour of fuel, an indication of a leak, to Asghar. They said he ignored them. They said the smell was getting strong. Next, they said, he left the shop for lunch. When he returned and opened the shutter, there was a cylinder explosion. Two passers-by were also injured. The injured were taken to Nishtar Hospital in a Rescue ambulance. Doctors treating them said that Asghar was in a critical condition. The other two injured men, identified as Aslam and Akram, they said, were out of danger. Salman, a shopkeeper in the market, told The Express Tribune that the blast was so severe that glass windows of three nearby shops were shattered.



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Some residents of a nearby colony said that they also heard the explosion. Some of them said they panicked and rushed out of their houses.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/356113/industrial-accidents-fuel-blasts-leave-2-dead-5-injured/>

#### USA, MA, BOSTON, MARCH 30 2102. LOGAN AIRPORT OIL STORAGE FACILITY OPERATORS FINED FOR INADEQUATE OIL SPILL TRAINING

BOSFuel Corp. and Swissport Fueling, Inc., operators of an oil storage facility at Boston's Logan Airport, will pay a \$90,000 penalty for failing to take adequate precaution to contain oil spills. The Logan facility is operated by BOSFuel, a consortium of major airlines, and has an oil storage capacity of over seven million gallons. Swissport Fueling operates the facility on a day-to-day basis. In a Sept. 2011 complaint, EPA asserted that the companies had not properly prepared for possible oil spills at the Logan facility in violation of federal oil pollution prevention regulations issued under the Clean Water Act. These Facility Response Plan (FRP) regulations require certain facilities, such as the one at Logan, to have a response plan for containing and cleaning up an oil release. EPA's action stemmed from a May 2011 unannounced exercise at the facility carried out by EPA, the Massachusetts Dept. of Environmental Protection (Mass DEP) and the U.S. Coast Guard. The objective of this exercise - a simulated oil spill - was to determine whether a facility can successfully respond to an oil release. As a result of the exercise, EPA determined that the companies were unable to properly implement the facility's FRP and its personnel were not adequately trained, resulting in an "unsuccessful" overall rating for the exercise. Since EPA filed its action, the companies have worked cooperatively with EPA, as well as the USCG and Mass DEP to correct the deficiencies noted during the exercise. Federal law requires that facilities that have the potential for spills take every step possible to prevent, before they occur, oil discharges to the nation's rivers, lakes and oceans through implementation of Spill Prevention Control & Countermeasure (SPCC) plans. Any facility with more than 1,320 gallons of above-ground oil storage capacity and meeting certain other criteria must develop and implement SPCC plans to prevent and contain spills, such as by installing impervious secondary containment around storage tanks and transfer areas. Facilities also need to know how to react to a spill to minimize environmental damage when one does occur. The FRP regulations require response planning and spill preparation especially for facilities with more than one million gallons of storage capacity. To ensure that a facility can adequately respond to a spill, it must have adequate employee training, spill response equipment, and a contingency plan for containing and cleaning up a release. While EPA's action against the Logan Airport oil storage operators is not based on an actual oil release but on the unsuccessful May 2011 unannounced exercise, other facilities should be aware that EPA will continue to pay unannounced visits to conduct simulated spill exercises at facilities throughout New England.

[FRP Requirements \(http://www.epa.gov/emergencies/content/frps/index.htm\)](http://www.epa.gov/emergencies/content/frps/index.htm)

#### UK, LONDON, MARCH 30 2012. PETROCHINA OVERTAKES EXXON AS BIGGEST OIL PRODUCER



*Exxon's market capitalisation remains substantially bigger than that of Petrochina.*

US giant Exxon Mobil has lost its crown as the world's biggest listed producer of oil to PetroChina, figures suggest. The Chinese firm said it produced 886.1 million barrels of oil last year - the equivalent of 2.43 million barrels a day. In January, Exxon said it produced 2.3 million barrels a day. Exxon's production fell in 2011 by 5%, while PetroChina's rose 3.3%. Exxon remains the more valuable firm, with a market capitalisation of \$400bn (£250bn) against PetroChina's \$280bn. It also remains more profitable. Exxon made a net profit in the final three months of last year of \$9.4bn. According to figures from the Reuters news agency, state-owned PetroChina made \$4.7bn over the same

period. Production at Exxon has been falling as older fields start to run short of oil. Some of the company's overseas contracts also limit the amount of oil it can produce. For these reasons, Exxon has said it expects production to fall again this year. In contrast, PetroChina expects production to increase during 2012. Analysts said the news that the Chinese company had overtaken Exxon was not surprising, given the more competitive nature of the US oil market. "If you look at total oil production, the US is still quite a long way [ahead] and produces twice as much as China does," said Julian Jessop, commodities analyst at Capital Economics.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-17556938>



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#### USA, MN, FARMINGTON, MARCH 30 2012. LIKELY SOURCE OF VERMILLION RIVER DIESEL LEAK WAS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE THERE

michelle leonard



The environmental service contractor Beterman Brownie, Inc. was called in to "vacuum" diesel from the Vermillion River as part of Wednesday's cleanup efforts. The company returned to Farmington on Thursday to continue the work.

The scrapyard believed to be the source of a diesel fuel leak in the Vermillion River did not have a permit. Its owner was on probation for running a similar operation in Castle Rock Township. Farmington planning director Lee Smick isn't sure when, or how, the property at the corner of Willow and Fourth streets went from storage to salvage. One thing is certain -- salvage yards like the one that sprung up at that location are not allowed within city limits. The property came to Smick's attention last week after a catch basin filled with diesel fuel leaked into the Vermillion River. The property used to be used for storage for

Landscape Depot, owned by Collin Garvey, but it had been vacant for several years. About a year ago, Smick said, Garvey approached the city, asking for a permit to use the property for metal recycling and storage, which is different than actually dismantling vehicles on-site. The city's ordinances do not allow for salvage yard activity, which is what the latter is considered. "I was under the impression it was going to be for the storage of metal," she said. "Neatly cut, stacked metal." Over the previous couple of weeks, Smick and assistant city planner Tony Wippler had noticed an increase of activity at the Fourth and Willow property. However, when she arrived at the property Wednesday, she found, among other things, a Greyhound bus on the property, ready to be dismantled. Garvey owns the property, but the salvage activity was being conducted by Castle Rock resident Cole Empey. Almost a year ago, Empey was convicted of misdemeanor charges for unlawful outdoor storage and violating a zoning ordinance in Castle Rock Township, where he had been conducting similar salvage activities. Empey is on probation for those charges through April 4, 2012. As of Monday, Smick said she had not been able to sit down with Garvey to find out exactly what was happening on his property. Charges are expected to come from last week's diesel spill, but those charges will likely come from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, which is investigating the matter.

<http://www.farmingtonindependent.com/event/article/id/19706/>

#### AUSTRALIA, WESTERN AUSTRALIA, PERTH, MARCH 30 2012. WESTERN AUSTRALIA DROPS LAWSUIT OVER VARANUS ISLAND GAS EXPLOSION



The state government of Western Australia has been forced to scrap its prosecution against US energy company Apache over the Varanus Island gas explosion in 2008, which cut the state's domestic gas supply by 30 per cent. WA Mines and Petroleum Minister Norman Moore said the case could not proceed because of a technicality. In proceedings launched in 2009, the government claimed Apache had failed to maintain a pipeline in good condition and repair. The disaster was sparked when the main pipeline to Apache Energy's gas plant erupted, causing an explosion, on June 3, 2008. But four QCs advised the government its case would fall down because a variation made to Apache's license meant the part of the pipeline that

exploded had been misclassified as "pipe works", rather than as a pipeline, Mr Moore said. Moore said Apache's lawyers argued that: "In effect part of the pipeline was not licensed and therefore they could not be charged with not maintaining a pipeline in good shape when in fact there was no such thing as a licensed pipeline". He said the technicality did not apply to any other pipelines in the state and should not affect cases for civil litigants over the explosion. Moore said the truth of what caused the explosion would come out in the form of an independent review shortly. "Because we have now not proceeded with the prosecution I'm going to provide to Apache a copy of the Bills Agnostini report," he said. "I will then make the report public and everybody will know once and for all what these two independent inquirers believe caused the Varanus issue."

<http://www.hazardxonline.net/article/49334/Western-Australia-drops-lawsuit-over-Varanus-Island-gas-explosion.aspx?AreaID=2>



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#### USA, WASHINGTON DC, MARCH 30 2012. BOARD REQUESTS COMMENTS ON ITS DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2012 TO 2016

The U.S. Chemical Safety Board (CSB) today announced it is requesting public comments on its draft [2012-2016 CSB Strategic Plan](#). The draft plan is an update of the [2007 – 2012 CSB Strategic Plan](#), and includes the CSB's strategic goals, strategic objectives, and associated measures for managing and evaluating agency operations. CSB Chairperson Dr. Rafael Moure-Eraso said, "The CSB is well positioned to work towards its mission of accident prevention. We will continue to advocate for the right to a safe workplace, and the efforts to make this right a reality." The draft plan is now posted on the CSB's website and available at [www.csb.gov](http://www.csb.gov). Please submit comments by April 12, 2012, via email to [strategicplan@csb.gov](mailto:strategicplan@csb.gov). The draft plan which is derived from the CSB's legislative mandate has three strategic goals and builds on the agency's 14 years of operating:

- Goal 1: Conduct incident investigations and safety studies that involve accidental releases or potential releases of hazardous chemical substances.
- Goal 2: Improve safety and environmental protection by securing implementation of CSB recommendations and broadly disseminating CSB findings.
- Goal 3: Preserve the public trust by maintaining and improving organizational excellence.

Goal 1 drives the core mission of the agency by ensuring that the CSB selects and completes incident investigations that have the potential to generate recommendations with high preventive impact. It also focuses the agency on developing and completing safety studies with an emphasis on emerging safety issues. Goal 2 focuses on implementing our recommendations and their associated advocacy and outreach. The highly successful CSB safety videos are an important component of the agency information dissemination efforts. Goal 3, on organizational excellence, serves to bind all agency processes using best practice project management. This includes the agency's high-performing information technology, administration, general counsel, procurement, and financial services functions. To update the [strategic plan](#) the CSB interviewed stakeholders in industry, academia, and other government agencies. The interviews were structured and designed to obtain feedback on the current state of the CSB and its mission and goals, and to explore ways to improve effectiveness. In addition, the CSB conducted internal interviews with Board Members as well as key managers and staff and conducted an internal survey to obtain employees' views about what should be included in the new strategic plan. The CSB is an independent federal agency charged with investigating industrial chemical accidents. The agency's board members are appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. CSB investigations look into all aspects of chemical accidents, including physical causes such as equipment failure as well as inadequacies in regulations, industry standards, and safety management systems. The Board does not issue citations or fines but does make safety recommendations to plants, industry organizations, labor groups, and regulatory agencies such as OSHA and EPA.

[www.csb.gov](http://www.csb.gov).

#### USA, GA, LEE CO, MARCH 30 2012. TRUCK BURSTS INTO FLAMES AT GAS PUMP

cade fowler

 [Watch the Video Truck Bursts into Flames](#)



*A fiery scene at a Lee County gas station Wednesday night.*

The sight would turn heads anywhere but what drew spectators, and lots of them along of US 19, taking pics and video, was the fact the inferno was next to a gas pump. "We didn't see any flames at first, but we got a little closer we started seeing flames coming out from underneath the hood," said onlooker Zack Lynniger. "The whole truck caught on fire and I was waiting for it to explode," said Heather Russell. "That's one thing I was afraid of... It was going to explode," Lynniger said. Russell and Lynniger joined several others in taking pictures and cell phones of the blaze. It was too close for comfort for Mahesh Dhody. "I ran inside and stopped the breaker. I told other customers at the pumps to leave so that nobody would get hurt," he said. He's the manager of the Shell Station and was on duty when the truck caught fire.. "The flames were on. It was blowing back and you see the black



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smoke up here(in the awning)," he said. Surveillance video shows him spotting the truck on fire after its driver pays for gas. "I ran inside got the extinguisher and had a phone in one hand calling 911," he said. Lee County Fire crews got to the scene within minutes. "When I arrived, not only was the truck on fire but the fire was spreading to the awning which covers these pumps. But we were able to quickly bring it under control," said Firefighter Billy Davis. Fire officials say a leak of flammable liquid in the truck sparked the blaze. As for the possible explosion feared by onlookers and nervous customers. "It is very rare. In this circumstance, no (it would not have exploded)," Davis said. The truck was towed away and was totaled by the flames. The gas Shell station sustained awning damage but re-opened a short time later.

<http://www.walb.com/story/17281703/truck-bursts-into-flames-at-gas-pump>

### USA, IN, PORTAGE, MARCH 30 2012. PORTAGE MAYOR SEEKS HELP PAYING FOR UNDERGROUND FUEL TANK CLEANUP

*john robbins*

The Portage Redevelopment Commission on Wednesday took up the task of underground fuel storage tank remediation, an issue that has plagued the city at least 10 years. The Portage Street Department and Police Department had underground fuel tanks that leaked fuel into the water table. The Indiana Department of Environmental Management required the aquifer to be cleared of contamination and contracted with Superior Environmental Corp. to undertake the remediation effort. Remediation involves continuously pumping water out of the ground at the site of contamination, testing the water, and continuing until no pollution or acceptable levels of pollution are detected, Development Finance Advisor John Shepard said. The city pays Superior and the city receives up to 95 percent reimbursement from the federal government. The city has been paying for the remediation using a combination of money from the Cumulative Capital Development Fund (CCD) and County Economic Development Income Tax (CEDIT). Mayor James Snyder argued that remediation is redevelopment and wants the redevelopment commission to pay the costs of remediation. This year's billings for work completed total nearly \$21,000. "Every penny we have in the CCD is important to us. We need to keep that fund for our own uses," Snyder said. The commission also took under advisement bids for lawn maintenance opened at the meeting. Hubinger Landscaping submitted the lowest bid of \$93,299. "We're in the process of determining how much the city can do on its own to see if we can save money here," Snyder said.

<http://posttrib.suntimes.com/news/porter/11586194-418/portage-mayor-seeks-help-paying-for-underground-fuel-tank-cleanup.html>

### USA, GA, LEE CO, MARCH 30 2012. EXPERTS SAYS GAS PUMP EXPLOSION WAS UNLIKELY

*ashton pellow*



People are still talking about a frightening fire a gas station in Lee County Wednesday night, but it may have looked worse than it was. Experts say there was little to no danger of a gas explosion even though a bucket truck went up in flames right next to a gas pump. The pump is still charred and roped off. Fire officials told me the clerk did everything right by hitting the kill switch to the pump's fuel supply. Safety features like that help from making a Hollywood-like explosion. A truck caught on fire after power steering fluid leaked onto an exhaust manifold. "The exhaust manifold was hot enough where it allowed the power steering fluid to reach its ignition temperature and actually ignite and start a fire," said Lee County Fire Department Assistant Chief Paul Branch. No one was hurt and firefighters put out the flames before things got out of hand. Shell's manager hit the kill switch as soon as he saw

the flames; that cut off all the fuel to the pumps preventing an explosion. "To have an explosion, it's going to have to have the perfect ingredients. Everything has to come together just right. It would be very, very, very rare," said Branch. Branch said the vapors from gas are more dangerous than gasoline itself. And even if there were to be an explosion, the possibility of the tanks exploding are slim to none. "Vapors are what is going to burn and the tanks only have so many outlets out of them so more than likely it would be like burning off a regular gas grill or fish cooker. It's only going to ignite where it has access for the vapors to come out," said Branch. Branch says gas stations have plenty of safety measures in place so accidents like this won't look like something out of Hollywood. "To say it's not going happen, I couldn't say that, but it would be very rare to see



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an explosion like you do on television." This is one scene management hopes never happens again. Another thing Assistant Chief Branch told driver to is ground yourself by your car to prevent static electricity because even the tiniest spark can start a blaze. Officials also say be careful while pouring gas into hot lawn mowers because dripping gas on its exhaust may start a fire as well.

<http://www.walb.com/story/17288081/quick-thinking-safety-features-prevent-potential-disaster>

#### USA, CA, FRESNO, MARCH 30 2012. HAZMAT CREWS RESPOND TO CHEMICAL SPILL IN FRESNO

The Fresno Fire Department, along with hazardous materials crews, responded to a small chemical spill at an anodizing company in Central Fresno. The incident happened just after 3 a.m. Thursday morning at Pacific Coast Anodizing on Pine near West -- just south of McKinley Avenue. Firefighters say a heater caused some chemicals to overheat causing two fire sprinklers to turn on. Hazmat crews worked with the fire department to make sure there no other leaks or spills of hazardous materials. No one was injured in the incident.

<http://abclocal.go.com/kfsn/story?section=news/local&id=8599679>

#### FRANCE, PARIS, MARCH 30 2012. TOTAL SENDS FIRE-FIGHTING SHIPS NEAR NORTH SEA GAS LEAK

*henning gloystein, muriel boselli, oleg vukmanovic, karolin schaps, sybille de la hamaide, and gwladys fouche*

**Watch the Video** [Fire-Fighting Ships Monitor Huge Gas Leak](#) [Raw footage of an animation from a Taiwanese company that illustrates French energy company Total's gas leak from its North Sea Elgin platform].



*Total's Elgin platform, about 150 miles off the coast of Aberdeen. The leak is from a gas pocket 2.5 miles underground, the company says.*

France's Total sent fire-fighting ships close to the scene of a gas leak from its North Sea Elgin platform on Thursday as a large gas cloud led to fears of an explosion. The company said the gas originated thousands of metres below the seabed, which engineers said might mean that a relief well - one possible option to stop the leak - could take months to drill. Total has not yet found a way to stop the gas leak. "The bad news is that the leak is continuing and that it reduces the possibility it could be plugged by sand or other material," Frederic Hauge, head of leading Norwegian green group Bellona, which has a team of oil experts monitoring Total's response, told Reuters. "The good news is that the flow rate of gas coming to the surface is

not increasing." A team of international engineers assembled by the embattled French oil company are drawing up plans to tackle the leak and prevent the flare from coming into contact with the gas cloud, the spokeswoman said. The platform is currently off limits to the engineers, however, given the toxic and explosive plumes pumping out of the wellhead. A flare needed to relieve pressure in the platform by purging excess gas has continued to burn less than 100 metres from the leak, and engineers said changes in wind and weather could lead to an explosion. "The wind is pushing the gas cloud in the opposite direction (from the platform). At this time, the circumstances are rather favourable," Jacques-Emmanuel Saulnier, Total's head of communication at Total said in an interview published on its website. "A gas cloud is always a fire hazard," he added. Total kept two fire-fighting ships in a state of readiness outside a two-mile exclusion zone, which was set up to protect marine traffic, a Total spokeswoman said. The company has also brought in a robot vessel, not yet deployed, to scan the sea bed for signs of spillage, she said. The leak started on Sunday and forced the evacuation of all 238 workers from the platform, which sits in waters less than 100 metres deep and 240 km (150 miles) off the east coast of Scotland. Total as well as UK authorities have described the expected environmental impact from the plume of gas and a spreading sheen of light oil on the water as "minimal", although environmental experts said much of the gas "cocktail" would be either flammable or poisonous at close quarters.

#### Pressure seen for Relief Well

The gas leaking from the platform above sea level is coming out of a pipeline Total sealed off from its main Elgin production reservoirs one year ago, the company said. "What we know is that the leak is not coming from a well dug by Total but from a naturally occurring pocket of gas located just above one of our wells," Saulnier said. Total said this formation of rock was about 4,000 metres below the seabed, over a kilometre above its own production reservoir. The company did not say what caused



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the gas from this pocket to enter its pipes and how it reached the surface. Hauge said that because the leak seemed to come from a pocket with less pressure and less volume of gas than Total's main reservoir, "we move from a worst case scenario to a bad case scenario. But this is not a good case scenario as long as gas is leaking." Jefferies securities and investment bank said, "We expect the field to be shut down for the rest of 2012 even if the leak is swiftly resolved, due to likely stringent inspections of the other wells on the field." Total warned on Tuesday it could take six months to halt the flow of gas. The company previously stated it hoped the leak would die down from natural causes as reservoir pressure drops. The depth of the non-producing reservoir that is feeding gas to the Elgin platform via compromised layers of piping suggests, however, there is more gas present rather than less, piling pressure on Total to drill a relief well, an engineer with knowledge of the matter said. Relief drilling would require boring through 4 kilometres of rock with painstaking mathematical precision, because it must intercept the gas pocket at exactly the right point, requiring constant alterations in course, the engineer said. The leak, one of the biggest in the North Sea for decades, could well inspire tougher safety regulation in due course, according to experts. Britain's health and safety watchdog said it was considering launching an investigation into the incident, while union officials said the frequency of offshore safety lapses had become intolerable. Memories are still raw in the North Sea industry of the Piper Alpha platform fire 24 years ago, which killed 167 people in the world's deadliest offshore oil disaster and led to a major regulatory overhaul. Total's shares were trading around 37.90 euros at 3.10 p.m. British time, down 7.6 percent since the beginning of the week. Analysts said the French oil major could face costs of up to \$10 billion (6 billion pounds) if its North Sea gas leak leads to an explosion and nearly \$3 billion if it takes months to fix. However, Jefferies bank said the data that had emerged on the spill had "further convinced us that the spill consequences should be less than the most pessimistic market estimates and hence that the \$9.7 billion sell-off in the stock since Monday is overdone."

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/world/13300968/total-sends-fire-fighting-ships-near-north-sea-gas-leak/>

**USA, MI, LANSING, MARCH 30 2012. ONCE A CLEANUP LEADER, MICHIGAN STRUGGLES WITH LEAKING FUEL >> THE STATE'S WATER IS AT RISK FROM 9,100 LEAKING UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS, SECOND MOST IN THE UNITED STATES.**

jeff alexander

**Ctrl-Click to open the interactive Google Fusion Tables map and explore Michigan's LUST sites.**



*No gas above ground. This former gas station at the western end of downtown Traverse City is atop a plume of pollution that started with leaking underground storage tanks. Michigan has thousands of such sites — and the one state fund for financing clean-up is set to expire at end of 2012.*

Just before reaching the stunning vista of Grand Traverse Bay, motorists driving into Traverse City on U.S. 31 pass an abandoned gas station that illustrates one of Michigan's most serious but undervalued environmental problems. The former Union 76 station at the corner of U.S. 31 and West Front Street sits atop a large plume of contaminated groundwater that was poisoned decades ago by four gas stations that operated at the west entrance to downtown Traverse City. Gasoline

from leaking underground storage tanks at the gas stations, known as LUSTs, contaminated soil, groundwater, and a nearby creek — and nearly reached the scenic bay. State officials and the gas station owners fought for years over a cleanup, but much of the pollution remains. Purge wells have contained the plume, but the problem is far from resolved. The situation is not unique to Traverse City. Michigan has 9,100 polluted LUST sites second most in the United States where fuel leaks have contaminated soils and groundwater, and, in some cases, fouled drinking water wells and surface waters. At least 1,440 of those LUST sites pose an immediate risk to human health, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Underground storage tanks cause problems when corrosion and rust eats away at aging metal tanks and allows gasoline or other chemicals to seep into soils and groundwater. Federal regulations enacted in the 1980s require gas stations to replace leaky metal tanks with more durable fiberglass tanks. Gas stations also must install leak detection systems, which are designed to prevent small leaks from becoming a major environmental problem. Pollution will fester at many of those sites for years, if not decades, because Michigan's LUST cleanup program has gone off the rails: Completed cleanups are down 80 percent from the late 1990s; the average cost of a cleanup here is \$US 400,000, four times the national average; and Michigan has one of the nation's worst rates for completing cleanups, according to government data. "We basically need to reinvent the program so we can get back to being one of the leaders in the nation in terms of managing our LUST sites," said



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Anne Couture, acting chief of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's remediation division. "We used to be at the forefront, and now we are near the bottom." At current rates, cleaning up the 4,500 orphan LUST sites in Michigan — where private property owners have not been held liable — would take the DEQ 90 years and cost \$US 1.8 billion, according to state data.

#### Many Factors Derailed Clean-Up Program

Budget cuts, a weakened environmental liability standard, and changing cleanup criteria have crippled a once-heralded program that forged cleanups at roughly 12,000 polluted LUST sites before it slowed to a crawl over the past five years. Among the problems, according to state and federal officials, industry representatives, and environmentalists:

- Changes to Michigan's environmental liability standard in 1995 made it harder for state officials to force privately funded cleanups. The current standard assigns liability to a person or business that caused the pollution, not to property owners. That has left the state with the cleanup bill at 4,500 so-called "orphan" sites — properties where the DEQ could not pin liability on a private party.
- The collapse of a state cleanup fund for LUST sites left the state, as well as many private property owners and businesses, without a pot of money to help pay for cleanups. State lawmakers in recent years took most of the \$US 56 million annually generated by a 7/8th of 1-cent gas tax, which was supposed to be used to clean up LUST sites, and used it to help balance the state budget.
- The DEQ in 2007 enacted policies that exceeded cleanup standards the Legislature approved in 1994. Industry officials said the 2007 standards made it extremely difficult to get a site declared clean.

"There are definitely real problems out there but not at all 9,000 sites," said Peter Bosanic, president of Lansing-based PM Environmental, Inc. His firm works on LUST cleanups in several states. Bosanic said the DEQ's 2007 rule forced the agency to move away from risk-based cleanups, which allow some pollution to remain in the ground, provided there is no risk of humans encountering the contamination. Risk-based standards to guide cleanups at LUST sites are used by 36 states, according to the Michigan Petroleum Association. [A package of bills](#) moving through the Michigan Legislature would overhaul the LUST cleanup program. One of the major changes would require the DEQ to allow risk-based cleanups. As it stands now, meeting the state's cleanup standard for LUST sites is like trying to hit a "moving target," according to industry officials. "The increasingly complex environmental compliance requirements and the inability to close LUST sites are inhibiting job creation and business growth in Michigan," said Craig Hoppen, chairman of the Michigan Petroleum Association/Michigan Association of Convenience Stores, in a recent press release. Hoppen is president of J & H Oil Co. in Grand Rapids, which owns dozens of gas stations and convenience stores. Couture — who worked for the DEQ in the 1990s, when the agency developed risk-based cleanup standards — said the LUST program has strayed from those criteria. "It's clear to me that there had been some issues in the program that had resulted in stalling site closures," Couture said. But Couture added that the number of LUST sites in Michigan is a serious problem that warrants action. "We have nearly 10,000 sites — it's a big concern," she said. James Clift, policy director for the Michigan Environmental Council, an advocacy group, said leaking underground storage tanks are a more serious threats in Michigan than elsewhere, due to the state's abundant waters and the fact that half the state's residents rely on groundwater for drinking water. More than 95 percent of the sites in Michigan have contaminated groundwater, according to government data. "Clearly it's a serious problem, given the sheer number of sites," Clift said. "Given this huge backlog of sites and lack of funding, we don't know how many ticking time bombs are out there that might be putting drinking water at risk." Clift said the state's LUST cleanup program is underfunded and understaffed. But he said the agency also has become "risk averse" in recent years when dealing with pollution sites. "At some point it's not worth the money (to keep cleaning up a site), especially if there is no exposure pathway that puts people at risk," Clift said. Efforts to deal with LUSTs in Michigan have faltered in recent years, with the number of cleanups completed down by 90 percent since 1997. Experts blame a lack of money committed to the problem. And what few dollars that are committed will disappear, if the Legislature allows the program's funding source to expire at the end of the year. The Legislature's diversion of gas tax revenue intended for LUST cleanups has left the DEQ with a maximum of \$US 20 million annually for the program in recent years. From 2005 to 2007, the agency received less than \$US 5 million annually in gas tax revenue for the program, according to state data. Michigan needs \$US 177 million annually to reduce the mushrooming inventory of LUST sites, which grows by about 300 annually, according to DEQ officials.

#### Pace of Cleanups Slows



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The number of completed cleanups at LUST sites has dropped dramatically over the past decade. In the five years after the Legislature approved risk-based cleanup standards in 1995, more than 1,000 LUST cleanups were completed annually. That slowed to an average of 200 completed cleanups over the past five years, according to government data. Michigan's Governor Rick Snyder has proposed \$US 30 million in funding for the LUST program in 2013. But, given the size of the LUST problem, an additional \$US 10 million is a relative drop in the bucket. Without a large infusion of cash and revamped cleanup criteria, many contaminated LUST sites will linger for years to come, according to a federal review of Michigan's program. That doesn't bode well for hundreds of communities facing the problem. Chuck Korn, who is chairman of Grand Traverse County's Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and supervisor of Garfield Township, said he was frustrated by the state's inability to force a cleanup at the contaminated LUST sites near Grand Traverse Bay. The county recently decided to take over the project in an attempt to recover cleanup costs. Korn said state lawmakers and Snyder must find a proper balance between environmental protection and economic development. "People need to quit playing politics with this environmental damage and, if we don't clean it up, it's going to hurt our children or our grandchildren," Korn said. "In this area especially, our biggest selling point is the natural beauty and the cleanliness of the area."

<http://www.circleofblue.org/waternews/2012/world/once-a-cleanup-leader-michigan-struggles-with-leaking-fuel/>

#### ENGLAND, YORK, ACOMB, MARCH 31 2012. DIANE HILL SERIOUSLY BURNED POURING PETROL IN KITCHEN

 **Watch the Video** [Fire Brigade Warns of Petrol Hazards](#)



*Diane Hill's condition in hospital has been described as critical but stable.*

A woman was badly burned when petrol ignited in the kitchen of her York home as she was pouring it into a jug. Diane Hill, 46, suffered 40% burns in the accident at her home in Moorgate, Acomb, on Thursday evening. The cooker, on at the time, ignited the fuel. She was "critical but stable" at Pinderfields Hospital in Wakefield. A fire service spokesman said: "Her daughter asked her mum for petrol because she had run out. The cooker was on and the fumes ignited." The accident came two days after government minister Francis Maude suggested that motorists take the "sensible precaution" of filling up jerry cans and keeping them in the garage. It has prompted the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) to ask the government to make an

urgent public safety announcement highlighting the dangers of petrol in the home. FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "The public do not understand the extreme dangers posed by petrol handling or storage and they must be advised as a matter of urgency. "Government needs to issue urgent professionally-based advice to warn the public before we have another incident, perhaps with far worse consequences." Prime Minister David Cameron said: "Well this is obviously a desperate incident and a terrible thing that has happened to this woman and my heart goes out to her and her family." Fire station manager Lee Smith, whose Acomb crew attended the fire shortly after 18:00 BST on Thursday, said: "The people were cooking their tea and dispensing petrol from a container to a glass jug. "The vapour then ignited, the jug was then spilt which obviously ignited as well and the person involved in the decanting was consumed by the flames. "Her daughter phoned 999 and was obviously extremely distressed." Ms Hill, who suffered 40% burns to her whole body, was treated by ambulance personnel in her kitchen before being taken to Pinderfields. Two firefighters wearing breathing apparatus extinguished the fire in the kitchen and removed the remaining petrol. A North Yorkshire Fire Service spokesman said: "Members of the public should take extreme care when handling and storing petrol and be aware of the risks associated with incorrect use and storage of fuel. "Never bring petrol inside your home. If you do smell petrol fumes in a garage or outbuilding, ventilate the area and make sure nobody smokes or turns electrical switches on or off. "The slightest spark could cause an explosion." It is not known if the 46-year-old had been storing petrol in advance of the threat of industrial action by tanker drivers. Mr Maude advised motorists to fill up jerry cans in case of a strike. This was subsequently clarified by Transport Minister Mike Penning, who said jerry cans could store 20 litres, more than the amount advised for safe home storage. John Mann, Labour MP for Bassetlaw, said Mr Maude should do the "decent thing" and resign over his comments. But Conservative Party Chairman Baroness Warsi rejected the call, telling BBC Newsnight: "I think what's deeply irresponsible and, frankly, sickening, is that the Labour Party want to make political points out of this personal tragedy for this lady."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-17560534>



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#### AUSTRALIA, NEW SOUTH WALES, NEWCASTLE, MARCH 31 2012. ORICA PLEADS GUILTY OVER TOXIC GAS PLUME

**Map:** [Newcastle 2300](#)



*Orica took more than 16 hours to tell the Environment Department about a toxic gas plume from its ammonia factory.*

Chemical giant Orica has pleaded guilty to environment law breaches over two pollution incidents in Newcastle. Orica took more than 16 hours to tell the Environment Department about a toxic gas plume from its ammonia factory which went over homes in the suburb of Stockton in August. The Government and Environment Department fended off criticism because many residents did not hear about the gas plume until three days later. Orica has pleaded guilty to failing to operate its Kooragang Island ammonia plant properly and failing to tell the Government "as soon as practicable" as required by law. It is due back in court over the Stockton pollution in June. Orica is also being prosecuted over a spill into ground water from its nearby nitric acid plant in October.

#### **Related Links**

[EPA update on Newcastle air monitors](#)

[New boss for troubled Orica plant](#)

[Orica to attempt re-start again](#)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-03-30/orica-pleads-guilty-over-toxic-gas-plume/3924086>

#### USA, WA, WHATCOM CO, MARCH 31 2012. SUNKEN BARGES BEING REMOVED FROM OFF LUMMI ISLAND

*caleb hutton*



The bulk of two sunken barges was removed by divers and construction workers this week off the shore of Lummi Island, after an oily sheen was spotted in Smuggler's Cove two weeks ago. But the removal work has caused small, periodic oil spills and occasionally left a fresh sheen on the water's surface, said state Department of Ecology spokeswoman Katie Skipper. About three-quarters of the smaller, 120-foot barge remains submerged in two pieces. They will remain there at least until June 15 because of a scheduled fish closure to protect migrating juvenile salmon, Skipper said. Divers found the hulls of both barges were saturated with hardened heavy oil, according to Ballard Diving & Salvage. Some of the oil appeared to get stirred up in mid-March while contractors were removing one of the barges owned by the quarry there, Lummi Rock, LLC. The company

wrapped containment booms around the submerged barges and the beach, and a day after that initial sheen was discovered, no more oil was visible on the water's surface. But some residual heavy oil was disturbed during the work, along with sediment, Skipper said. "It's a small amount of oil, but it's coming out periodically," she said. "All the work they've been doing has weakened the hull." Ecology officials don't know exactly what's inside the hull of the smaller barge, but it appears to be empty. The containment booms should remain there until the second barge is lifted out of the water, Skipper said. Ecology is also requiring Lummi Rock to have a spill response plan in case more oil escapes in the meantime. The initial slick affected about 200 feet of shoreline. Ecology officials are continuing to investigate Lummi Rock, Skipper said. A team of six divers cut up and helped to remove the larger, 180-foot barge first. It had been a British warship in World War II before it was converted into a barge, said Ballard Salvage Master Troy Nylander. Rock and gravel were inside when crews pulled it up. The two barges were cut into 20- to 60-foot-long chunks so they could be lifted out. Both barges had been submerged for about two years, Nylander said. The 400 tons of steel from the barges will be recycled.

<http://www.bellinghamherald.com/2012/03/29/2459692/sunken-barges-being-removed-from.html>



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#### **USA, MI, WAIKA BAY, MARCH 31 2012. BAY MILLS INDIAN COMMUNITY RESPOND TO DIESEL FUEL SPILL AFTER FISHING VESSEL SINKS IN WAIKA BAY**

Spill response personnel of the Bay Mills Indian Community deploy boom March 29, 2012, to contain diesel fuel released by the H.W. Hocks, a tribal fishing vessel that sunk in Waika Bay. Last year, the U.S. Coast Guard provided training to people from BMIC, as well as other Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority members, in order to enhance their readiness to respond to environmental accidents such as this. Clean up operations are underway Thursday evening, as members of Coast Guard Sector Sault Sainte Marie, Mich., and the Bay Mills Indian Community work together to ensure the containment and clean up of about 100 gallons of diesel fuel from the fishing vessel H.W. Hocks, which sank in Waika Bay. Wednesday, at about 6:30 p.m., the Bay Mills Tribal fishing vessel H.W. Hocks was reported sunk and the cause of a discharge of diesel fuel into the water. Pollution investigators from Sector Sault Sainte Marie arrived on scene early Thursday morning along with Bay Mills Indian Community response personnel and equipment. BMIC personnel were able to expeditiously deploy boom and other oil spill response equipment to contain the spill. The Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority, an organization established by BMIC and four other tribes, provided BMIC with spill response equipment that was obtained through a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency. In September, CORA's environment and conservation staff arranged a spill response training session with Coast Guard personnel aimed at enhancing the readiness of response equipment for a situation of this type. "This collaborative response demonstrates our shared commitment to protecting the waters of the Great Lakes, a precious resource," said Lt. j.g. Adam Saurin, Sector Sault Sainte Marie public affairs officer. "Environmental stewardship cannot be one agency's job it's truly a team effort." The cause of the H.W. Hocks' sinking is currently under investigation and is unknown at this time. The Coast Guard advises that people remain clear of the salvage area until cleanup and salvage operations have concluded. Coast Guard and BMIC personnel will continue to work together to mitigate the effects of the spill.

<http://www.bymnews.com/news/newsDetails.php?id=100770>

#### **USA, S.C, AUGUSTA, MARCH 31 2012. CLEANUP OF VEGETABLE OIL SPILL IN AIKEN COUNTY UNDER WAY**

*rob pavey*

A spill involving about 250 gallons of vegetable oil is being cleaned up near a Warrenton biodiesel plant, according to the S.C. Department of Health & Environmental Control. "We are responding to this incident and cleanup is still on-going," agency spokesman Adam Myrick said. The spill originated at Green Valley Biofuels LLC, which recycles waste oil and other materials to make biodiesel. In a report filed by the company with the National Response Center, the spill was attributed to operator error and caused by a valve on a "tote container" being accidentally left open overnight. The spill was first discovered March 22 and cleanup work remains under way. "They have removed most of the product from the 'ditch' area and are still working on clean-up in the 'wooded' area," Myrick said, adding that the material has been contained.

<http://chronicle.augusta.com/latest-news/2012-03-30/cleanup-vegetable-oil-spill-aiken-county-under-way?v=1333123898>

#### **USA, N.J, NEWARK, MARCH 31 2012. FIRE CREWS RESPOND TO OIL-DRUM RELEASE AT NEWARK RECYCLING COMPANY**

*chris de benedetti*

Alameda County firefighters were called to the scene of a minor accident at a Newark recycling company Thursday night, exactly one year after an explosion and fire injured an employee at the same business. No injuries or fires were reported in the late-night incident at Evergreen Oil at 6880 Smith St., a company with a history of accidents and punitive fines from local and state agencies. About 10:40 p.m., Newark police officers and 17 firefighters, including a hazardous materials team, responded to reports that simmering chemicals had blown the lid off a 55-gallon oil drum filled with paint-related products, Battalion Chief Kris Kerstetter said. Firefighters found six other oil drums that were "warmer than normal," and then isolated and cooled them, Kerstetter said. Authorities said they are not sure what caused the incident, but there was no danger to the public. "It didn't get in the storm drains, and there was no damage to the building," Kerstetter said. "It could have been a barrel malfunction that didn't ventilate properly; it was stored in a cool area, and there were no ignition sources nearby." Firefighters and hazardous materials crews left the scene shortly after midnight. The company recycles and re-refines waste oil and stores other waste disposal items. On March 29, 2011, Evergreen Oil's malfunctioning waste oil equipment started a two-alarm fire that left one employee with an injured arm and forced the company to halt waste-oil operations for several months. Cal/OSHA fined Evergreen Oil nearly \$22,000 and issued four citations in connection with the fire.

[http://www.mercurynews.com/breaking-news/ci\\_20289690/oil-drum-release-prompts-fire-hazmat-response-newark](http://www.mercurynews.com/breaking-news/ci_20289690/oil-drum-release-prompts-fire-hazmat-response-newark)



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#### USA, VA, ALEXANDRIA, MARCH 31 2012. A SHOTGUN MARRIAGE? ETHANOL AND OLD OUTBOARD BOAT ENGINES

Ever since E10 gasoline (gas containing 10% ethanol) became widely available several years ago, the nation's largest recreational boat owners group, BoatUS, has received hundreds of calls and emails complaining about boat engine problems. The majority of complaints concern older outboard motors, those made before about 1990. BoatUS' Seaworthy magazine asked Mercury Marine's Ed Alyanak and Frank Kelley, who between them have over 60 years of experience, to find out what's made these decades-old outboards more susceptible to ethanol's well-known problems and what owners can do.

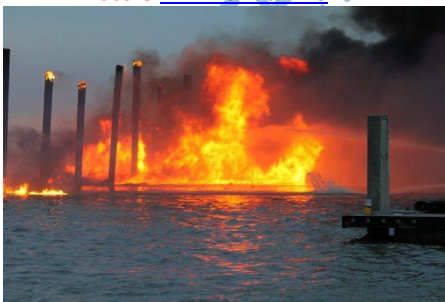
- Vulnerable hoses: In the mid 1980's new standards (SAE J1527) for fuel hoses were developed for "gasohol," which was known to deteriorate rubber and plastics. Since then, problems with hoses have largely gone away, but that doesn't mean they are maintenance free. Tech Tip: Any hose older than 10 years should be replaced. Here's another way to test rubber fuel hose condition: wipe a clean rag along the hose. If you smell gas on the rag, replace the hose immediately.
- Carburetors: O-rings and rubber carburetor parts on older engines tend to get hard and brittle when exposed to ethanol and then break off in bits and pieces causing clogs, misfires and shutdowns. Pre-1990 carburetors were also made from alloys that didn't stand up to ethanol, leading to corrosion that can cause tiny fuel orifices to clog, resulting in hard starts and poor running. Old carbs are also "dumb" in that they were designed to run on only one type of fuel. Ethanol, however, has more oxygen and affects the air/fuel ratio, causing engines to run leaner and hotter. Tech Tip: The best solution with old outboards is to run straight gas - if you can find it. Some mechanics may also have the ability to "recalibrate" a carburetor to tolerate E10 (note: gas with ethanol greater than 10% should never be used with any boat engine).
- Plastic fuel filter bowl: Some older engines may have plastic fuel filter bowls. Tech Tip: If you still have one, replace immediately with a metal bowl.
- Fuel fill gasket: Keeping water out of the fuel tank is even more important with ethanol as it can eventually lead to the formation of two separate solutions in the gas tank (water and fuel), also known as phase separation. The process is more common on older boats which are more likely to have accumulated water at the bottom of the tank. Once phase separation happens - the tipping point when water in the gas is either harmlessly ingested or transformed into a corrosive mixture no engine will run on - there's no going back. No fuel additive can restore E10 back to its normal state. Tech Tip: Age and exposure to ethanol can rot fill gaskets or O-rings. Replace them every few years.
- "Gunk" in the tank: It is still possible that some old outboards and boat fuel systems have yet to sip a drop of E10. But once your boat drinks its first tankful, ethanol will "scour" or dissolve the gunk that's been coating the tank walls (and hoses) for years. Tech tip: You may want to think about hiring a professional to have the tank drained completely of any gas and water at the bottom before adding your first load of E10. If not, keep a supply of filters on hand - they will clog quickly. Always use a fuel stabilizer and avoid using octane boosters that contain ethanol.

For more information on ethanol and boat engines, go to <http://www.BoatUS.com/seaworthy/ethanol.asp>.  
[http://www.smithmountaineagle.com/news/article\\_410147d4-7a71-11e1-b725-001a4bcf887a.html](http://www.smithmountaineagle.com/news/article_410147d4-7a71-11e1-b725-001a4bcf887a.html)

#### USA, WA, BELLINGHAM, MARCH 31 2012. MISSING COUPLE FEARED DEAD IN SQUALICUM HARBOR BOAT FIRE

caleb hutton & zoe fraley

 **Photo's** [WA Marina Fire](#)



Jim Peebles, Division Chief of Special Rescue with South Whatcom Fire Authority, shared this photo of a fire that broke out Friday morning, March 30, 2012, in a boathouse on the East G dock at Squalicum Harbor.

Search and rescue teams continued working late Friday afternoon, March 30, but investigators said two people missing in a huge fire at Squalicum Harbor likely were trapped aboard a burning boat that sank during the blaze. The fire that broke out at about 5:30 a.m. Friday destroyed a series of boathouses and 10 yachts moored at Gate 3, G Dock East, near the Bellingham Yacht Club. Some of the boats were loaded with fuel, creating a series of explosions as tanks erupted into fireballs. Jim Langei, 43, and Sterling Taylor, 33, were living on a 42-foot recreational trawler in



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## Dangerous Goods - Hazardous Materials Group & Network

### Release 2012 – 826 Newsy Stuff

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the boathouse, said Bellingham police Sgt. Shawn Aiumu. Langei works for Whatcom Educational Credit Union on the business service team and also owns America's Cup, a coffee shop near the Yacht Club. His wife, Taylor, is the shop's manager. "Everybody's heartbroken," said Alan Hamilton, a friend of the couple, as others gathered at the marina Friday awaiting word of their fate and sharing memories of them. Aiumu said the couple's family had not heard from them, but said there's a chance they were not aboard the boat at the time of the fire. "There's always a chance," he said. A U.S. Coast Guard helicopter and divers searched the area for any sign of the couple, but debris and other hazards held up the search effort. "We're hoping for the best," said, Roger Christensen, assistant chief with the Bellingham Fire Department. The boats were docked beneath individual metallic boathouses, each about a foot apart, Christensen said. Flames destroyed the entire line of shelters, with the boats inside, before firefighters could extinguish the blaze. Port officials weren't sure exactly how many boats were housed there Friday morning. The city decommissioned an old fire boat, Fire Belle, last year and didn't replace it because of the cost. "We were unsuccessful in securing funds to replace it," Christensen said. "We could have used it today." Crews were only able to get to the fire from nearby docks. G Dock East is among the farthest from shore, about a quarter-mile out near a breakwater. "When you fight fire, you want to be able to fight it from multiple sides," Christensen said. "(A fire boat) is the perfect tool." Bellingham Fire Chief Bill Boyd was reluctant to get rid of the boat, but said at the time that it was necessary to do so to provide other basic fire and emergency-medical services. Keeping the boat cost the city about \$30,000 a year. Friday's fire was the second one in the harbor in the past month. In late February, fire destroyed a sailboat and damaged another boat. Firefighters are continuing to investigate the cause of Friday's blaze. They're not sure where the fire started, Christensen said, so investigators are looking at photographs of the fire in its early stages to determine the point of origin. From downtown Bellingham, thick black plumes of smoke could be seen rising northeast from the harbor at 6 a.m. Fuel tank explosions were reported about 6:45 a.m., lasting about a half an hour. Two hours later, the smoke had died down, but fire fighters were still putting out the last remnants of the flames. Pilings continued to smoulder Friday afternoon. State Department of Ecology crews arrived by 10 a.m. to investigate any oil, diesel or other environmental hazards that may have gotten into Bellingham Bay. Containment booms were able to keep fuel from the sunken boats within a small area, said Dick Walker, of Ecology. Clean up will probably take several days, he said. It's estimated that the boats, together, likely had several hundred gallons of fuel aboard, but it's unclear how many gallons might have spilled into the water, officials said.

<http://www.thenewstribune.com/2012/03/30/2089167/two-missing-after-massive-fire.html>

## IRELAND, COUNTY CARLOW, MARCH 31 2012. MOCK DERAILMENT AND CHEMICAL SPILL TESTS 500 EMERGENCY STAFF

*louise hogan*



*Anne Slattery from the HSE checks a patient as he arrives at the medical centre in Carlow as part of a mock accident.*

More than 500 emergency personnel rushed to the scene of a crash between a chemical tanker and a bus that caused a train to be derailed. They needed to cope with a chemical spill and multiple casualties, but thankfully it was all just one big training exercise. The mock accident outside Carlow town railway station, dubbed "Exercise Railroad", involved the closure of the line and Cannery Road in the town from 8pm on Thursday night. Ger Guerin, the chief fire officer for Carlow, said it was the biggest training exercise in the south east since 2006. He said 14 evaluators are examining the exercise and early indications were that it was "very successful". It involved more than 500 people from Irish Rail, the gardai, [Health Service Executive](#) (HSE), local authority ambulance and fire crew as well as the Coast Guard rescue helicopter. The emergency personnel were dealing with a scenario where a chemical tanker collided with a bus on the busy N80 Cannery Road. The tanker then careered off the road, knocking the parapet of the railbridge on to

the line, which caused the main Dublin to Waterford train to be derailed. Civil Defence personnel played the role of 81 live casualties. Mr Guerin, who has been planning the event since August, confirmed it started at 8.29pm on Thursday and ran until 1am yesterday.

<http://www.independent.ie/national-news/mock-derailment-and-chemical-spill-tests-500-emergency-staff-3067197.html>



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#### FRANCE, PARIS, APRIL 1 2012. 'WELL FROM HELL' IS FINALLY SAFE: BURNING GAS FLARE ON TOTAL'S STRICKEN NORTH SEA PLATFORM HAS 'EXTINGUISHED ITSELF'



*Total is preparing to sink two relief wells to stop a gas leak at a North Sea platform in parallel with a plugging operation.*

French energy company Total says the gas flare above its stricken North Sea platform - dubbed the 'well from hell' - has burned itself out. A gas leak at the platform, about 150 miles off the Scottish coast, forced the evacuation of 238 staff members earlier this week. Total says it will try to choke off the flow of gas using so-called 'heavy mud,' a mixture containing mineral compounds. The company also says it's trying to drill relief wells into the sea floor to help stop the leak. A statement from the company said: 'Total can this morning confirm that the flare on the Elgin platform has extinguished itself. 'We received the first indication that the flare may be out at 12.07 yesterday from our first surveillance flight of the day. The news was then reaffirmed at 16.36 following our second flight of the day. 'We received what we consider final confirmation at 08.20 this morning, when our sea vessels on location reported no further flare activity through the night.' The company had said that there was minimal risk from the flare, which was burning about 150 metres above sea level. About 200,000 cubic metres of gas have been escaping every day from the Elgin platform, about 150 miles off the coast of Aberdeen, Philippe Guys, Total UK managing director, said. Speaking at a press conference yesterday, he said there has been 'little change' in the past five days. Proposals to stop the leak include 'killing' the well with mud and drilling relief wells which could take as long as six months. Two drilling rigs have stopped work on other wells in the area. Mr Guys added: 'The question has been asked if there could be similar problems with other wells on Elgin. What I can tell you is that when the platform was evacuated, all other wells were left in a safe condition.' Spotter planes have been making three flights a day over the rig. The gas is coming from a rock formation below the sea, underneath the Elgin platform. It is then escaping into the air from a leak on the platform at the top of the well, about 25 metres above sea level. All 238 workers were evacuated when the leak was discovered below the rig on Sunday. The alarm was raised by workers just after noon on Sunday after mud sprayed out onto the wellhead platform, followed by escaped gas. Helicopters carried more than 200 workers to safety between 1pm and 2pm and by midnight the remaining 19 staff were removed. Total brought in a remotely operated vehicle to scan the seabed for signs of a subsea leak as well as two ships able to pump seawater to extinguish any fire. The fire risk saw Shell partially evacuate its Shearwater and Hans Deul rigs - four miles away - on Monday night. Bosses shut down Shearwater for 'health and safety' reasons.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2123224/Burning-gas-flare-Totals-stricken-North-Sea-platform-extinguished-itself.html?ito=feeds-newsxml>

#### USA, MI, BAY MILLS, APRIL 1 2012. VESSEL GOES DOWN IN BRIMLEY BAY

scott brand



*Containment booms have been placed around the H.W. Hocks to contain diesel fuel and other pollutants believed to be leaking from the partially-submerged fishing vessel. The boat was discovered below the water line Wednesday evening, prompting a response by the Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority and the United States Coast Guard.*

Clean-up efforts are underway on Brimley Bay just off of Bay Mills Point after a fishing vessel sank Wednesday evening, spilling a yet-to-be determined quantity of diesel fuel. "There is some sheening in the water and puddling along the beach," said Petty Officer Jorge Cancel of the United States Coast Guard on Thursday. Cancel explained the Coast Guard was not taking an active role in the clean-up, as the partially-submerged boat was sailing under the Bay Mills Indian Community banner. As a result, the Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority, an organization comprised of five different tribes, was taking the lead role in this effort. "We're just out here to observe the clean

up," said Cancel, adding the Coast Guard will continue to monitor the site during daylight hours until it is satisfied with the result. "We tell them what we want to see." The official measurements of the boat, which has been identified as the H.W. Hocks, were not available on Thursday and those at the scene were unable to provide an estimate as most of it was well



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below the water line. The best guess, to date, is somewhere around 30 feet in length. The U.S. Coast Guard was estimating approximately 100 gallons of fuel had spilled in a press release issued Thursday evening. A visual inspection of the scene showed there was some discoloration of the sand and debris along the beach. An odor of diesel fuel was in the air. Bay Mills Tribal responders had surrounded the sunken vessel with a yellow boom to contain some of the spilled diesel fuel and were also deploying a white absorbent boom designed to soak up petroleum products, according to Cancel, less than 12 hours after the ship had reportedly gone down. The first reports of the vessel sinking came in at approximately 6:30 p.m. Wednesday. The boat is believed to have been moored at the site where it had been used for commercial fishing operations. Cancel said it was too early to tell what caused the boat to go down in the bay, but did speculate it may have been caused by a shaft seal leak. The U.S. Coast Guard is advising people to stay clear of the area until clean up and salvage operations are complete.

<http://www.sooeveningnews.com/news/x1440920402/Vessel-goes-down-in-Brimley-Bay>

#### USA, MI, MARQUETTE, APRIL 1 2012. GUILTY PLEA WITHDRAWN IN EXPLOSIVES CASE

*kyle whitney*

A Sault Ste. Marie man accused of possessing more than 4,000 pounds of explosives has withdrawn a guilty plea entered last month and will face trial this spring in U.S. District Court in Marquette. "The client has changed his mind. He has decided that he is going to maintain his innocence," said Charles Malette, the attorney for John Francis Lechner. "The man wants his trial and that's what he's going to get." Lechner, 65, originally agreed to a plea agreement on Feb. 21 in which he pleaded guilty to one count of possessing explosives while under indictment, a 10-year felony. In exchange for the plea, the U.S. Attorney's Office agreed to drop four other felony charges, including unlawfully transporting explosive materials, unlawfully distributing explosive materials, unlawfully distributing explosive materials to a convicted felon and improper storage of explosive materials. Court documents indicate that between Feb. 29 and March 2, the court received three separate, but nearly identical, letters from Lechner. In the letters, he requested a trial and a withdrawal of his plea. In the first letter, which was handwritten, dated Feb. 26 and received by the court on Feb. 29, Lechner requests the court allow him a trial. "So many people are frightened because of what the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Sheriff of Chippewa County told the media about me," he wrote. "My lawyer will prove these allegations are false." Those allegations stem from a September incident in which a government informant wearing a wire allegedly helped Lechner transport about 4,150 pounds of ammonium nitrate and fuel oil. The pair moved the materials, a blasting agent typically used in mining and other commercial operations, from property Lechner owned on Blalock Road in Sault Ste. Marie to a shed on the informant's property in Dafer. A federal agent then obtained permission to search the informant's property and located 83 50-pound bags of the ammonium nitrate and fuel oil mixture on pallets in the shed. The next day, a search at the home of Lechner's mother allegedly revealed dozens of blasting caps and boosters, as well as 2,000 feet of detonator cord. A later search at Lechner's Blalock Road property found 12 more blasting caps, according to court records. Court testimony from September indicated that Lechner allegedly told the informant he was moving the ammonium nitrate and fuel oil in an attempt to hide it from federal agents. When the informant asked why Lechner needed such a large quantity of the mixture, Lechner allegedly responded: "When the government gets taken over, we will be mercenaries." During the time the ammonium nitrate and fuel oil was being moved, Lechner allegedly told the informant that if anything happens, he should say the mixture was intended for use as fertilizer, according to testimony from Lechner's preliminary hearing in September. Lechner also allegedly told the informant the move was being done in order to hide the mixture from government agents. Testimony revealed there was enough ammonium nitrate and fuel oil to produce an explosion equal to or exceeding that of the April 19, 1995, bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Okla., that killed 168 people. It is a felony to possess explosives while under indictment for a crime punishable by more than one year in prison. According to court documents, Lechner was arraigned on Sept. 13 in Chippewa County Circuit Court and charged with felony charges of false report of a felony, false pretenses and assaulting, resisting and obstructing a police officer. Attorneys for both the prosecution and defense said the trial will likely be scheduled for May.

<http://www.dailypress.net/page/content.detail/id/535670/Guilty-plea-withdrawn-in-explosives-case.html?nav=5003>



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