

EPA/TCEQ statement on controlled ignition of trailers at Arkema facility

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 3, 2017

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After Hrs

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality released the following statement along with Unified Command regarding the decision to conduct a controlled ignition of remaining trailers at Arkema's facility in Crosby:

It is the understanding of personnel on the ground that the remaining trailers are at risk of catching fire over the next few days. Rather than risk additional damage to the facility or spreading into the surrounding area, the Crosby Volunteer Fire Department and the Harris County Fire Marshal's Office will perform a controlled burn of the material.

First responders are outside the evacuation zone, but remain in the area, for quick response to ensure the safety of the community around the facility.

We continue to monitor smoke and air quality, the potential for additional fires in the area, and have aerial assets ready to be deployed, as needed. Everyone in the area should follow the safety instruction of local authorities, specifically staying out of the evacuation zone, avoiding smoke and flood waters

Additional Background:

As with all smoke, people can limit the potential for adverse health effects by limiting their exposure. This includes staying indoors with doors and windows closed and running the air conditioning (if possible) with the fresh intake closed. If it is absolutely necessary to be outdoors, try to move out of the plume of smoke and minimize heavy work, exercise, or children's playtime.

As of Sunday, Sept. 3, multiple trailers of organic peroxide caught fire following the refrigeration units being compromised by catastrophic flood waters. EPA has been sending aerial surveillance aircraft to

test resulting smoke and continues to do ground-level air quality monitoring. EPA's plane instrumentation is capable of measuring 78 different chemicals, including peroxides. Neither testing methods found toxic concentration levels in areas away from the evacuated facility.

Local officials are maintaining a 1.5-mile area of evacuation to assure that the public is protected. Air monitoring has confirmed that this is sufficient based on current conditions and anticipated events.

The EPA and the TCEQ are providing direct support to incident commander Michael Sims of the Crosby Volunteer Fire Department and Chief Bob Royall of the Harris County Fire Marshal's Office, who are leading a coordinated local, state, and federal effort as part of the Unified Command to control the fire at the Arkema facility in Crosby.