

TEJAS STATEMENT ON ARKEMA DISASTER

September 2, 2017 12:00pm

At approximately 2 am on August 31, 2017 ARKEMA Inc. Crosby Plant reported two explosions and black smoke coming from the plant. Local officials previously established an area 1.5 miles from the plant based on their assessment of the situation. Potential threat of additional explosions remains.

Around 5:05 pm September 1st representatives of the Harris County Emergency Operations Center observed multiple dark plumes of smoke and a fire at the plant. Potential threat of additional explosions remains.

ARKEMA has stated that if you are OUTSIDE THE 1.5 MILE EVACUATION AREA AND SMELL SMOKE, PLEASE TURN OFF YOUR AIR CONDITIONER TO AVOID EXPOSURES. The plants site has also stated that ARKEMA DOES NOT MAKE EVACUATION DECISIONS.

For these and additional concerns Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services urges residents within and outside of the 1.5-mile evacuation area to evacuate and seek safety from friends and family further from the facility. There is no exact idea over the area of exposure to these toxic chemical substances. If you stay inside the vicinity and smell the smoke please Shelter-In-Place. T.e.j.a.s is not a government or county entity. We are a 501c3 registered environmental justice advocacy nonprofit.

What does Shelter-In-Place mean?

Go inside immediately. Close and secure all doors and windows securely. Turn off all ventilation systems (air conditioning, heating and fans). Listen to the radio or television and in this instance, wait for the visible smoke to clear. It is important to consider the temperature conditions. We do not recommend this option considering the heat.

ARKEMA has stated a possibility that organic peroxides will release into the flood waters. Residents may see an oil sheen or smell an odor. Plant officials have also stated a combination of fire an environmental release. The fire will be explosive and intense. In case of significant or long term exposure, these effects may be intensified. People should remain clear of the area.

ARKEMA has stated that the smoke might be irritating to the eyes, skin, lungs, nausea, and drowsiness or dizziness, and that these are key health effects. Other flammable materials on site could catch fire. The plant has a permitted underground injection well of which they have not been able to evaluate due to 5 feet of water.

So far, some reported fires have been due to temperature sensitive products. The facility has these types of products stored into 8 separate diesel powered refrigerated units. Products are stored in multiple locations on site and a threat of additional explosions remain.

Plant officials have stated to not return to the area of evacuation until local authorities announce it is safe to do so. Due to how flammable organic peroxides are, as agreed with public officials, the plant has stated the best course of action is to let the fire burn itself out. Again, products are stored in multiple locations on site and a threat of additional explosions remain.

Note: All plant information was gathered from the Crosby ARKEMA resource online:

<http://www.arkema-america.com/en/>

Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (T.e.j.a.s.) is a 501c3 registered nonprofit, dedicated to providing community members with the tools necessary to create sustainable, environmentally healthy communities by educating individuals on health concerns and implications arising from environmental pollution, empowering individuals with an understanding of applicable environmental laws and regulations and promoting their enforcement, and offering community building skills and resources for effective community action and greater public participation.