

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA (1942)
STANDARD OIL COMPANY OF
KENTUCKY



Reorder No. 912-1/3

PARK BRAND FOLDER
MEDIUM HEAVY WEIGHT

ETHYL GASOLINE CORPORATION

ATLANTA DIVISION

RHODES-HAVERTY BUILDING

INTER-OFFICE
CORRESPONDENCE

SAFETY DEPARTMENT			
O. S. L.	✓	G. C. L.	ATLANTA, GEORGIA
E. K. L.		J. T. S.	
RECEIVED: AUG 1 1942			
E. O. J.		P. M. P.	
J. G. R.		J. S.	
S. I. B.			
RETURN TO G. C. L.			

August 9, 1942

Mr. Oscar B. Lewis,

Dear Oscar,

This will supplement the information that I gave you over the telephone Saturday afternoon concerning the possible exposure of three men, who are employees of the Hammond Iron Works of Hammond, Pennsylvania, in a large leaded gasoline terminal storage tank at the Savannah, Georgia terminal of the Standard Oil Company of Kentucky.

On July 18th and 19th, 1942, our representative observed the cleaning of tank No. 1 which is the tank involved in this incident at the Savannah terminal of the Standard Oil Company. This is an 80,000 barrel tank and was not cleaned lead-free at that time. A copy of the report made by our representative at that time is attached herewith for your ready reference.

You will note from this report that this cleaning was done preparatory to dismantling the tank. On Monday morning, August 3rd, Fred Rahn was in Mr. S. C. Anderson's office at the Standard Oil Company in Atlanta and discussed plans for dismantling this tank. Rahn called me from Mr. Anderson's office and told me that it was their intention to start this work on Wednesday morning, but that we would receive subsequent definite confirmation of this sometime later in the day when they would know positively that the work would start at the time designated. I asked Rahn over the telephone about the plans and procedure for dismantling this tank, although he had previously gone into some detail with the Standard construction personnel in the Atlanta office about the manner in which this work was to be done, with special emphasis being put on the desirability of having these details conform with our "Precautions For Men Entering Tanks That Have Contained Leaded Gasoline". When Rahn originally discussed this with them, as well as on August 3rd when he called me from their office, it was understood that the entire work of dismantling would be carried on from the outside of the tank. It was definitely understood that they would drive the rivets clear from the outside and would lower the plates to the ground with a boom and hoist. The plates were then to be cleaned lead-free by employees of the Standard Oil Company with proper equipment, and then oiled preparatory to shipment.

During Monday afternoon Mr. Anderson made a number of attempts to get in touch with Fred Rahn or me, evidently with the idea of notifying us that the work was to start as planned on Wednesday morning. However, since I left Atlanta for Washington on the two o'clock train that afternoon, I was

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not available and Fred Rahn was busy out in the city during the remainder of the day and of course Mr. Anderson was unable to get in touch with him. Mr. Tully was out of town, having gone to New Orleans with Mr. Martin Sunday night. Before leaving Atlanta, I had left instructions in the office that as soon as Mr. Anderson or any one of his men confirmed the date of the dismantling work, a wire was to be sent to Tom Tennent in Jacksonville to be on hand at the time required. It was also understood that Mr. Anderson was to provide us with this information on Monday afternoon.

About five o'clock in the afternoon no word had come to the office on this, and knowing that it was desirable to notify Tennent by wire that day in order that he might arrange his plans to go to Savannah the following day, our office called Mr. Anderson to obtain this information. At that time Mr. Anderson stated that the work would begin on Wednesday morning about nine o'clock, and accordingly a telegram was sent to Tom Tennent, instructing him to be present at that time.

I would particularly like to point out the statement in the fourth paragraph of Tom Tennent's letter which reads as follows: "According to Mr. Tolbert in a conversation he had with Mr. S. C. Anderson of the Atlanta office Monday afternoon, he told Mr. Anderson that the men were working in the tank and that Mr. Anderson said that since they had already started, let them go ahead."

From this it is rather evident that by the time our office talked with Mr. Anderson at five o'clock to obtain confirmation of the starting time of this work on Wednesday, he evidently had information to the effect that the work had already started and that the men had gone into the tank without being properly equipped.

On Saturday morning, August 8th, Tom Tennent called me from Jacksonville and gave me the information contained in his report, the original of which is attached. I immediately, with Fred Rahn, went to the Standard Oil Company and attempted to see Mr. Anderson or one of his assistants, none of whom were available, however. I then attempted to see Mr. Hodgson, District Manager, but he was away from the office as well. I talked with Mr. W. S. Sutherland, who is Marketing Assistant to Mr. Hodgson, explaining the situation to him, and he promised to get in touch with Mr. Anderson by some means as soon as possible and would let me know what their intentions were just as soon as he talked with Mr. Anderson.

Soon thereafter I called you and subsequently talked again with Mr. Sutherland, telling him that I had talked with you and of your suggestion that Dr. Train in Savannah examine the three men who had been in the tank.

Shortly thereafter Mr. Anderson called me and took a somewhat supercilious attitude from the very start towards the whole situation. He stated that he could not in any way see that there was any danger involved since the tank had been steamed for ninety hours. I suggested to him during our talk that the three men who had been exposed be examined by Dr. Train and that we be notified as soon as possible so that if they were not perfectly all right, it could be reported to you for a decision as to whether a doctor should make a trip from Cincinnati for a more detailed examination in

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accordance with the idea that you expressed to me over the telephone. He told me that it would be impossible to get in touch with these men because they had no idea where they were staying or any means through which they could be located until Monday morning when they reported for work. He also expressed the opinion that we should get some other doctor than Dr. Train, since it was his opinion that Dr. Train was not a capable doctor. I pointed out to him that Dr. Train had been in on the previous difficulties in Savannah and would probably be in a better position to judge the information that would be desired by our Medical Department than any one else available.

After quite a lengthy discussion in which I attempted to point out in a reasonable way the potential possibilities involved in this situation, as well as the undesirable phases of their plans for continuing the dismantling from the inside of the tank without the use of any equipment whatsoever for protection, and which were to be put into effect on Monday morning, Mr. Anderson became very belligerent, indicating that we were unreasonable and arbitrary in our requests in connection with tank cleaning and repair and dismantling work on tanks that had been used for storing leaded gasoline by the Standard Oil Company of Kentucky, whereas we were far more lenient with other companies. He also criticized the fact that Tom Tennent was on the job and that no one had been told of our recommendations for handling this work in accordance with those that had been set up by our Company.

It was then necessary for me to point out in a very firm way that as long as Tom Tennent had been on the job that there had been no infractions of the regulations prescribed by our Company because no one had entered the tank from the time he arrived until the time he called me on Saturday morning, and that in addition to this, he and every one of his men have copies of our "Precautions For Men Entering Tanks That Have Contained Leaded Gasoline". He then stated that they have never received any instructions of any kind, but when further questioned he admitted that he had the sheet giving "Precautions For Men Entering Tanks That Have Contained Leaded Gasoline". This I knew to be true because we had provided them not only for his office but for each one of his tank cleaning and construction crews in the field, and I have personally seen them posted in the air-line mask trunk that is used for tank cleaning activities. After admitting that he had these precautions, he stated that it did not cover the situation involved. He was then referred to the last paragraph on this sheet which refers to the precautions for repairmen.

Mr. Anderson made a large number of excuses for what had already been done as well as for the fact that he did not want to change the plans for continuing the work Monday on the inside of the tank, the roof of which had been removed from the outside during the time that Tom Tennent was on the ground, one of which was the fact that he knew nothing about the contract and that it would be necessary to take the matter up with Louisville to see whether they would prefer to go ahead as outlined regardless of our recommendations. I told Mr. Anderson that we of course were in no position to tell them what they must or must not do, nor can we in any way give orders to the men of the Hammond Iron Works who are doing the dismantling work, but that we certainly are in no position to approve the manner in which it had been handled so far, nor give approval for a continuation on

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the basis as outlined.

Mr. Anderson finally agreed to take this matter up with Louisville just as soon as possible to obtain the decision from them on how the work is continued, and to advise us as soon as this word is received. He also agreed to have the three men who have been exposed examined by Dr. Train the first thing Monday morning and provide us with a report on his findings.

I would like to go on record as stating that in spite of the fact that at least four of our employees, including myself, have talked with Mr. Anderson on various occasions about our safety program in general as well as the details involved in the "Precautions For Men Entering Tanks That Have Contained Leaded Gasoline", he has always been very luke warm to our program and while not openly stating it, has by his actions and attitude shown that he felt that the prescribed regulations of our Company are unnecessary and unwarranted. It is my feeling that wherever possible he would be inclined to cut corners with regard to our recommended safety precautions in tank cleaning and repair work, unless one of our men were there to observe and advise. This same type of attitude exists with only one other of the Standard construction men in our Division. This is a Mr. F. R. Schwarz, who is Assistant Construction Engineer in the State of Florida. Fortunately in this case, we have a man with whom we work, Mr. Joe Culverhouse, who is over Mr. Schwarz, and whenever difficulties are experienced with the latter, it can very easily be straightened out through Mr. Culverhouse.

Both Mr. Anderson and Mr. Schwarz apparently take the attitude that we are "tilting at windmills" and because of their long period of experience in construction work they are quite sure that they know as much about this type of activity and what is necessary to protect the men involved as anyone else does.

This is certainly not the general attitude of the Standard organization in the territory, since this type of attitude has not been adopted by any of the other State organizations, and as a matter of fact, we have received nothing but the finest cooperation from the other officials in the Atlanta organization of Standard in any type of work in which we have engaged.

As you probably realize, much of the work handled by the construction engineers in each district office of Standard of Kentucky comes directly under Mr. Glossop of the Louisville office. I have gone into considerable detail in this report purposely since the matter is to be carried to Louisville by Mr. Anderson. There is in my mind a very good possibility you may be contacted by someone in the Louisville office and I felt it desirable for you to have all facts at hand when and if this should occur.

Tom Tennent has observed the men who were exposed very carefully during the time that he was in Savannah, and through late Friday afternoon they apparently had felt no physical effects as a result of the time that they had spent in the tank. It is my feeling that the physical examination by Dr. Train will probably show that the men have received no ill effects of

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this incident. However, it is my feeling that these men who are planning to continue their work on the inside of the tank without the proper protective equipment, including the cutting of rivets, handling of plates, etc., should not be allowed to continue on this basis and be subjected to possible additional exposure. Therefore unless the matter can be settled amicably and satisfactorily with Mr. Anderson, it is my intention to talk with Mr. Hodgson, District Manager, Monday morning and lay the matter before him. As a matter of fact, we shall undoubtedly discuss the whole matter with Mr. Hodgson regardless of the outcome of the current situation in order that he may know the entire story and possibly give us some additional help for future activities.

We have discussed with Tom Tennent his laxness in not reporting the matter of the men having been in the tank immediately upon learning of it to this office, or in an emergency, if no one was available, to you. We have explained to him the possible consequences of not reporting immediately and completely a matter as serious and important as this. In view of the many safety discussions which we have held individually and collectively with all of the men in this Division, there is no reason for failure to recognize and realize how important and serious instances of this sort can be.

Very truly yours,


George P. Rosser.

GPR:ro
cc: Mr. J. G. Martin
Mr. H. A. Mack

Enclosure

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ETHYL GASOLINE CORPORATION

ATLANTA OFFICE

1417 HEALEY BUILDING

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

G.W. WARREN
DIVISION MANAGER

G.P. ROSSER
ASSISTANT DIVISION MANAGER

Jacksonville, Fla.,
August 8, 1942.

Mr. Alan C. Tully,

Dear Alan:

On August 3rd, I received a telegram from the Atlanta Office stating that The Standard Oil Co. of Kentucky was dismantling ~~the~~ a tank at their Savannah terminal Wednesday, August 5th, beginning work at 9 A. M.

I drove to Savannah Tuesday afternoon, arriving around 4 o'clock, and called the Standard Terminal as soon as I checked into the hotel. As this terminal is being liquidated, they no longer have a terminal superintendent on the job. The man I talked with was the watchman. When I asked if they were going to dismantle a tank there the next day, he informed me they had been working on it since Monday morning, and that the men had just left for the day.

Upon my arrival at the terminal next morning, I found Mr. J. R. Tolbert, construction foreman for the Standard Oil Co., there, with a crew of men painting pipelines and doing other small repair jobs around the terminal. Mr. Wesley Tall, foreman for the Hammond Iron Works, of Hammond, Pa., had three men in the process of dismantling the tank. These men had worked inside the tank on Monday and Tuesday, after having removed one section from the bottom panel and one section from the top. They had welded 238 bracket lugs to the shell on the inside, and also erected a portable steel scaffold on the inside of the tank.

I talked with Mr. Tolbert, asking him who had authorized the men to enter the tank. He said that he had not done so, as his instructions were not to authorize anyone to enter the tank without the presence of an Ethyl man. If he did not actually authorize their entry, he certainly condoned it by telling them which tank was to be dismantled, and not telling them not to enter same. According to Mr. Tolbert, in a conversation he had with Mr. S. C. Anderson, of the Atlanta office, Monday afternoon, he told Mr. Anderson that the men were working in the tank, and that Mr. Anderson said since they had already started, let them go ahead.

I called the Atlanta Office, to find Mr. Tully in Louisiana and Mr. Rosser in Washington. As the men were now working outside the tank, cutting rivets on the roof, and apparently all in good health, I waited until Saturday morning to call the Office and report the situation.

About 10 o'clock Wednesday morning, Mr. Robert Adamson, assistant construction superintendent for SOKY, arrived from the Atlanta office. I explained the seriousness of the situation to Mr. Adamson. He said it was his understanding that the tank was to be dismantled from the outside, but he did not know whether or not it was in the contract. I suggested that he call Mr. Anderson in Atlanta and find out whether it were in the contract, but he said the contract had been

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ETHYL GASOLINE CORPORATION

ATLANTA DIVISION

RHODES-HAVERTY BUILDING

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

ALAN C. TULLY
DIVISION MANAGER

G. P. ROSSER
ASSISTANT DIVISION MANAGER

Mr. Alan C. Tully - #2

August 8, 1942.

let in Louisville, and he did not think they had a copy in the Atlanta office, so there ~~was no~~ point in calling Atlanta.

Mr. Ball said that he had dismantled other tanks from the inside in other sections of the country. He said they had been cleaned by washing down the walls with a fire hose and spraying them with oil. Mr. Adamson suggested that we spray the walls with oil. since they had previously been washed down with the fire hose. I told him we could try it and see what our Company's reaction would be prior to actual dismantling. The shell of the tank was sprayed with oil, using an old tank car air-brake tank filled with oil, putting 40 pounds of pressure on the tank with an air compressor, and using a garden hose and nozzle for a spray. This was not to be construed to take the place of the cleaning and oiling of the plates on the ground after dismantling.

As previously mentioned, the men worked on the roof of the tank on the outside through Friday. They do not work on Saturday or Sunday, but will start work Monday morning and plan during Monday to start work on the inside.

Unless I hear from you to the contrary, I shall be on hand when the men start work Monday morning, and insist that no one enter the tank without proper equipment.

Very truly yours.

T. H. Tennent
T. H. Tennent

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