

Monsanto Chemical Company
Texas City, Texas

August 17, 1959

CONFIDENTIAL

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT

MON-1106

To: W. E. Repschleger

CC: H. M. Keating
Chief Operators D4-5-7-8
Extra (3)

Subject: Department 5 Organic Spill

At 1530 Friday, August 14, 1959, approximately 4-5 barrels of organics spilled from the benzene column (5D1) atmospheric vent.

A spill alarm was turned in but the code was incorrect. The Safety Department was notified of this error. A second alarm was not turned in because the spill was stopped and under control by this time; however, the Fire Chief reported to the unit and remained there until the emergency was over.

Events leading up to this spill were as follows:

- a) Department 5 was shut down Thursday, August 13, 1959, and 5D1 and 5D2 were left inventoried while repairs were being made to 5D3 feed line.
- b) As work progressed on 5D3 feed line Friday, instructions were given to the chief operator to bring 5D1 and 5D2 up on total reflux.
- c) Shortly after the steam was opened to 5D1 reboiler, the top pressure went off scale and organics began spilling from 5D1 flame arrestor.
- d) The steam to 5D1 reboiler was immediately blocked in and the column's sump and overhead cut to slop and the spill stopped.

Operations washed down the structure and all organics were recovered before reaching the sewer.

Two factors contributed to this spill: 1) The AL feed control valve was not blocked in Thursday when the unit was shut down and AL leaked by and built an excessive level in 5D1, and 2) The column was not properly checked and lined up before starting steam to the reboilers.

H. T. Wheatley

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