Monsanto

FROM (NAME—LOCATION—PHONE) D. R. Bishop - G4WA - 4-2891

DATE : August 2, 1988

cc. D. G. Bartolanzo - G4WF
G. A. Young - G4WF

SUBJECT :

REFERENCE :

TO : R. G. Potter - G4NH
D. B. Price - G5NG
D. L. Sliney - G4NJ

In case you missed it, attached is the Post-Dispatch and WSJ coverage of the PCl_3 incident.

Should anyone wish to see it, I also have the TV coverage on videotape, including the second-day coverage featuring Mayor Carl Officer blasting area residents for "crying wolf."

We are drafting a "letter-to-the-editor" which would take the P-D to task for the outrageous Monday morning headline. More on that later.

Dan R. Bishop

DRB:ec

Attachments

DSW 136333

Monsanto Chemical's Leak in Illinois Sends Over 120 to Hospitals

SAUGET, Ill. (AP)—The second leak of a noxious chemical in 3½ months from a Monsanto Chemical Co. plant sent more than 120 people to hospitals. At least nine were admitted although none had serious injuries, hospital officials said.

Less than three gallons of phosphorous trichloride, a component of the herbicide Lasso, escaped into the air when a "rupture disk," designed to break when pressure built up in the tank, gave way Sunday morning, said a spokeswoman for the St. Louis-based Monsanto Co. unit.

The leak was plugged within five minutes, and no evacuation was ordered.

On April 17, 22 square blocks of neighboring East St. Louis were evacuated when about 250 gallons of the substance spilled during loading onto a railroad tank car.

Most people who went to hospitals Sunday were released after treatment for burning eyes, nausea, headaches, shortness of breath and dizziness.

"My chest was hurting and my eyes was watering and my throat was. . .dry and every time I breathed, it felt like my wind was cutting out," said Danny Cleggett, 22 years old, of East St. Louis. He said he was at his mother's home, about a mile from the plant, when fumes entered the house.

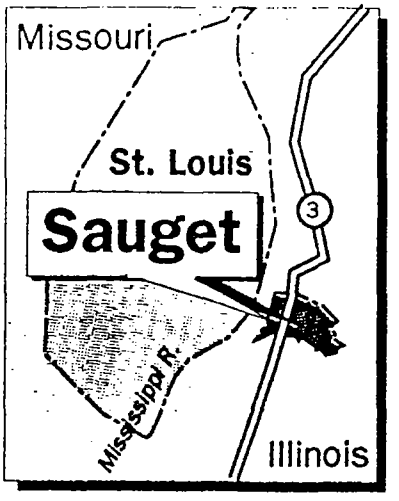
Mr. Cleggett was in good condition at Centreville Hospital, a nurse said.

Monsanto officials began an investigation immediately after the leak, the company spokeswoman said. She also said that, as in April, the company will pay medical expenses related to the spill.

DSW 136334

STLCOPCB4036298

Monsanto Leak Injures Scores



By Carla Barksdale and Philip Dine
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

A chemical leak at a Monsanto Co. plant in Sauget on Sunday sent more than 100 people to Metro East hospitals for treatment of minor illnesses.

The leak was the second chemical accident reported at the plant in less than four months. Both accidents this year involved a chemical called phosphorous trichloride, which is used in agricultural chemicals.

A spokeswoman for Monsanto said most of the people were treated and released Sunday. Several were hospitalized for observation.

"Apparently the material forms a vapor that did go in the direction of East St. Louis," said the spokeswoman, Diane Bartolanzo.

The chemical leaked from a storage tank for five minutes — from 7:35 to 7:40 a.m. — apparently because of a ruptured disk on the tank for the finished product, Bartolanzo said.

She said three gallons had leaked from the tank — not enough to call for an evacuation of the area. But the plant's alarm was sounded as a precaution.

East St. Louis Mayor Carl Officer said the city's emergency service and disaster agency was investigating the leak. He said he expected a full report by midday today. Officer said he anticipated cooperation from Monsanto in finding out what happened.

"They've always been very open about letting us see their reports," Officer said.

Officer said he was concerned, but added: "It happens all the time. It would happen even if Monsanto wasn't here."

He said chemical fumes also blow across the river from a Mallinckrodt Inc. chemical plant off Interstate 70

See LEAK, Page 4

Leak

From page one

in St. Louis.

"The river isn't a boundary when it comes to chemical fumes," Officer said. "People who live in this area are used to that."

A nursing supervisor at Gateway Community Hospital in East St. Louis said 14 people had been treated and released for runny noses and eyes and coughing. Three people were admitted to the hospital for closer observation.

Bartolanzo said 65 people had been treated and released at St. Mary's in East St. Louis. Hospital officials at Centreville Township Hospital in Centreville said 25 people had been treated and released.

Kava Beck, 19, of Lynch Street in East St. Louis, said she was outside Pilgrim Green Missionary Baptist Church, 1028 Mississippi Avenue, at about 10 a.m. Sunday helping set up for the morning service when she saw "pieces of smoke in the sky."

"All of the sudden I started coughing," Beck said. "My little 2-year-old girl started throwing up."

Her mother, Senora Beck, who also was at the church, said: "I smelled sort of like a heavy odor in the air. The kids started coughing. It made me sick to my stomach."

Kava Beck said she was angry about the spill.

"This is my second time coming to the hospital because of a chemical leak," she said. "I am highly upset. My girl hasn't eaten anything all day. It's bad for a child not to eat anything all day just because of a chemical spill."

Beck, who recently gave birth to a girl, said she had had complications during her pregnancy. She said her doctor attributed her problems to the chemical spill at the plant in April.

Earnstine Dean, 28, of Lebanon Avenue in Belleville, also was helping clean the church yard when "I started feeling something inside like a bad smell and started vomiting."

Dean and the Becks were interviewed as they awaited treatment Sunday night at Centreville Township Hospital.

In April of this year, a railroad tanker at the same plant was overfilled with phosphorous trichloride. About 300 gallons of the chemical spilled to the ground and hundreds of families had to be evacuated. About 200 people sought medical attention.

Following is a review of chemical accidents that have happened since 1980 at the Monsanto Co.'s Sauget plant.

- April 17, 1988 — The overfilled railroad tanker overflowed.
- Sept. 4, 1987 — Fumes from a chemical spill at the plant sent 52 residents of East St. Louis to emergency rooms complaining of breathing problems. All were treated and released. About 10 pounds of concentrated sulfuric acid was spilled in the accident.
- April 8, 1987 — A chemical leak sparked a fire at the plant. Two mildly toxic chemicals — phosphorous pentasulfide and phosphorous pentoxide — were spilled. No injuries were reported.
- March 3, 1986 — A chemical leak at the plant sent an employee to the hospital for observation. One hundred pounds of chlorosulfonic acid was spilled.
- Jan. 22, 1984 — About 5,400 gallons of phosphorous oxychloride spilled to the ground, apparently after a piece of ice fell and severed a nozzle from a tank. About 100 people were treated and released. The accident was so large that it had to be reported to the Environmental Protection Agency.

DSW 136335

STLCOPCB4036299

Officer Questions Number Of Hospital Visits After Leak

By H.J. Jackson
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

East St. Louis Mayor Carl E. Officer says he is suspicious that 254 area residents visited Metro East emergency rooms Sunday, complaining of effects from a brief chemical leak at a Monsanto Co. plant in Sauget.

Many went to the emergency rooms several hours after the leak was sealed, he said.

"I find it difficult to believe that many people were injured in a five-minute spill at 7:30 in the morning," Officer said Monday. "That would be fraud, wouldn't it? I find it very suspect."

Officer and some other city officials said they feared that some people who complained of illnesses after the leak might be trying to get compensation for non-existent injuries.

But they are instead hurting the credibility of people who have legitimate complaints, the officials said.

The leak occurred from about 7:35 a.m. to about 7:40 a.m. at Monsanto's W.G. Krummrich Plant, in Sauget. Monsanto representatives said about 48 pounds of phosphorous trichloride had escaped. The chemical, used in agriculture, can cause irritation to the eyes and respiratory system.

The company sounded its emergency sirens to alert nearby residents after the leak.

A spokeswoman for Monsanto said a pressure seal on a chemical tank had failed, allowing the chemical vapor to escape.

The vapor formed a white cloud that slowly moved to the northeast, into East St. Louis.

Officials from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency visited the W.G. Krummrich plant Monday. They said a determination of the cause of the leak probably would take several days.

"Part of the investigation will be to see if the pressure disk failed or if the tank was overpressured," said Max McComb, the plant's superintendent of environmental affairs.

> **"I find it difficult to believe that many people were injured in a five-minute spill at 7:30 in the morning."**
>
> **CARL E. OFFICER,** Mayor of East St. Louis

Diane Bartolanzo, a spokeswoman for Monsanto, said the company planned to pay medical expenses for the people who visited the emergency rooms.

About 3,000 gallons of the same chemical spilled from a railroad car at the same Monsanto plant in April. Bartolanzo said the company had paid the medical bills and some compensation to residents who complained of illness from that incident.

"That was a much greater spill," she said. "The EPA doesn't require us to report an emission until it reaches 1,000 gallons. We sounded the alarm (Sunday) as a precaution."

East St. Louis Emergency Services and Disaster Director George Foster submitted a report Monday to Officer noting that emergency alarms went off at 7:32 a.m. Sunday. City officials were notified at 7:39 a.m. The all-clear was sounded at 8:35 a.m., the report said.

Foster reported that when the all-clear sounded, just seven people had reported to St. Mary's Hospital in East St. Louis; one to Centreville Township Hospital in Alorton; and none to Gateway Community Hospital in East St. Louis.

But as of Monday morning, 160 people had reported to St. Mary's, and one was admitted; 70 had reported to Centreville Township Hospital, and two were admitted; and 24 had visited Gateway Community Hospital, where five were admitted. Those admitted to the hospitals were kept for observation. Most were released by late Monday. No one was seriously injured, authorities said.

Most people seeking treatment complained of eye, skin and respiratory irritation.

Lawrence Triplett, 80, a resident of the Rush City area at the south end of East St. Louis, said, "It missed Rush City; the wind didn't come this way."

But Bettie Lee Henley, one of Triplett's neighbors, said she had heard the warning siren and promptly called her daughter to take her from the area.

"I came back at noon" Sunday, Henley said. "I didn't know what it was. And whenever I call Monsanto and tell them I'm sick, they tell me to go to the hospital."

DSW 136336

STLCOPCB4036300

BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICES, INC.
NEW YORK PHILADELPHIA ST. LOUIS DENVER

7838 Big Bend Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63119
(314) 961-4113

CLIENT: Monsanto Company STATION: KMOX Radio

PROGRAM: KMOX Radio News TIME: 4:06 P.M.

DATE: 7/31/88 CITY: St. Louis

BOB HAMILTON: "What's described as a broken disk at the Monsanto plant over at Sauget, Illinois, this morning caused about three gallons of phosphorous trichloride vapor to escape into the nearby community. A Monsanto spokesperson says the leak began about 7:30 this morning. It took about 5 minutes to shut down the process and stop the leak but the community alarm was sounded as a precaution.

"We're told more than 90 people have now been seen at Metro East area hosptials for eye, nose and throat irritation.

"The spokesperson said the plant is launching a full investigation."

DSW 136337

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NEW YORK PHILADELPHIA ST. LOUIS DENVER

7838 Big Bend Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63119
(314) 961-4113

CLIENT: Monsanto Company

STATION: KMOX Radio

PROGRAM: KMOX Radio News

TIME: 5:06 P.M.

DATE: 7/31/88

CITY: St. Louis

BOB HAMILTON: "More than 90 people have been given first aid at hospitals in Metro East following a chemical leak at the Monsanto plant at Sauget, Illinois, this morning. Monsanto spokesmen tell KMOX nearly three gallons of phosphorous trichloride vapor escaped. It drifted over nearby communities shortly before 8:00 this morning.

"Hospital spokesmen say eye, nose and throat irritation were reported by those seeking treatment."

DSW 136338

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7838 Big Bend Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63119
(314) 961-4113

CLIENT: Monsanto Company STATION: KMOX Radio

PROGRAM: KMOX Radio News TIME: 6:06 P.M.

DATE: 7/31/88 CITY: St. Louis

BOB HAMILTON: "Metro East hospitals have seen more than 90 people today for eye, nose and throat irritation following an early morning vapor leak at the Monsanto plant at Sauget, Illinois.

"A spokesperson at Monsanto said the leak occurred about 7:30 this morning. It took some five minutes to shut down the process and stop that spill.

"The community alarm was sounded as a precaution. The all-clear was given about 8:45.

"The spokesperson says the plant is conducting a full investigation."

DSW 136339

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NEW YORK PHILADELPHIA ST. LOUIS DENVER

7838 Big Bend Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63119
(314) 961-4113

CLIENT: Monsanto Company

STATION: KMOX Radio

PROGRAM: KMOX Radio News

TIME: 7:06 P.M.

DATE: 7/31/88

CITY: St. Louis

BOB HAMILTON: "A cloud of phosphorous trichloride from the Monsanto plant at Sauget, Illinois, prompted more than 90 down-wind residents to find first aid at Metro East hospitals this morning. Officials describe the complaints as eye, nose and throat irritation."

DSW 136340

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