

CCR 000081371



VCM HEALTH PROBLEM - JAN. THRU JUNE, 1976



Interoffice Communication

To To File
From C. E. Gremillion
Date January 7, 1976
Subject Report of Unexpected VCM Release
to OSHA, Baton Rouge, LA.

A report was made via the telephone approximately 9:30 am CST 12/31/75 to the OSHA Area Office in Baton Rouge regarding a VCM release which occurred in the VCM Plant December 30, 1975. Mr. Larry Durio, Industrial Hygienist, was the OSHA representative I talked to.

First, Mr. Durio asked me to describe the release. I reported that approximately 9:00 - 9:30 am, December 30, 1975 our plant had an unexpected VCM release resulting from liquid VCM entering the plant's vent stack and causing a spillage of approximately 20 gallons of VCM to the atmosphere.

Mr. Durio wanted to verify our release was monomer and not polymer. I explained the product was monomer. Mr. Durio stated he needed more information. Mr. Durio asked for the company's name, address, my name, title and home phone number. He then asked me to describe how the accidental release occurred. I explained that apparently a mechanical failure had occurred initially Tuesday morning due to a Tenneco owned tank car magnetic dip stick gauging device not functioning properly causing the tank car to overfill and get VCM into the plant vent stack.

Mr. Durio asked how high was the vent stack? I informed him approximately 140-150 feet high and located near our tank car loading rack area.

Mr. Durio asked if any sampling was conducted during the spillage to determine VCM concentrations. I explained the combustible gas indicator was used after the spill and a fixed point monitor (vent recovery) was within approximately 125 feet of the stack at the time.

Mr. Durio asked what action did we take immediately to control the situation? I stated, first, the pumper/loader at the loading rack shutoff the vapor valve from the tank car leading to the stack then the area was cleared of all personnel. Then 2 supervisors and 2 employees came to the area. The two employees applied water from 2 fire monitors on the VCM spillage to knock down the vapors and dissipate the vapor cloud. Following this, the area was checked using a combustible gas indicator and determined safe from an explosion standpoint. Mr. Durio then asked if the employees in the area were wearing respiratory protection? I stated no.

Mr. Durio then asked if sampling measurements were taken during the spill? I explained our fixed point monitoring point read 30 ppm during this time. I further explained that the G.C.'s highest setting was 30 ppm and therefore the concentration might have been significantly higher than 30 ppm. He asked how many employees were exposed. I stated the 4 men previously mentioned plus a contractor walking near the area of the vent stack and the pumper/loader on the loading rack downwind of the spillage area.

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Mr. Durio asked approximately how long would I estimate these employees were exposed? I answered probably between 10-15 seconds. I further explained each of the employees stated they smelled VCM vapors for a short time until they had a chance to evacuate the area and/or get upwind.

Mr. Durio then referred to the standard and explained I was required (1) to verbally notify the employees immediately that they were exposed to VCM above 5 ppm for 15 minute period and (2) to inform each employee within 10 days in writing the same information above and the steps being taken to correct this occurrence.

Mr. Durio also stated we may be requested to supply a more detailed written description of the incident and what steps are being taken to correct this situation if the Area Director so desired. He stated the request, if made, would be addressed to the VCM Plant, my attention.

Mr. Durio asked if we find a unique solution to the magnetic dip stick gauging problem to drop him a note. He stated this information might be useful in future dealings with plants using similar tank car loading operations to help resolve their problems. I stated if it was something worthwhile, I would.


C. E. Gremillion
Safety Director

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cc:
VCM file