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Illinois EPA To Check On Leak At Monsanto's Plant In Sauget

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SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — Investigators from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency will be at Monsanto Corp.'s W.G. Krummrich plant in Sauget on Monday to check into a chemical release that occurred after a fire Wednesday.

Will Flower, a spokesman for the agency, said the investigation into the release of two mildly toxic chemicals would probably take between two and three hours.

Ralph Foster, a chemist with the agency, said the chemicals were phosphorus pentasulfide and phosphorus pentoxide. Foster said the chemicals were used in the manufacture of several products, including insecticides and laundry detergents.

Andi Smith, a spokeswoman for Monsanto, said the release had occurred after the chemicals escaped from an overheated pipe and started a fire at the site. She said that once the fire was under control, employees sealed a valve to shut off the leak.

Flower said the investigators would seek to determine "what went wrong, how it went wrong and what can be done to prevent it." He said the release could point to either minor or major problems, such as a faulty valve or a design flaw at the plant.

He said an alarm at the plant had been sounded as soon as the release was detected. No evacuation was needed after the incident, and no injuries were reported, Flower said.

Smith said the area of the plant where the fire took place had been closed. She said that area would be reopened once company officials found out what caused the release and they fixed the problem.

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