

the state

Plant explosion prompts 27 citations by agency

United Press International
TEXAS CITY — The federal job safety agency Monday issued a total of 27 citations against Texas City Refining Inc. resulting from an early summer explosion at the plant that killed seven workers and hospitalized six others.

The U. S. Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration alleged violations of safety and health rules in three categories — five "willful," 17 "serious," and five "other than serious."

The agency proposed penalties totaling \$48,290 for the citations.

The citations resulted from an inspection of the Texas City plant following the series of early morning explosions on May 30.

The alleged willful violations of occupational safety regulations involve:

— Insufficient examination of a pressure vessel tank for wall thickness on four occasions dating back to 1965.

— Improper setting of the relief valve on a pressure vessel tank.

— Failure to take necessary action to relieve the pressure inside the pressure vessel tank and stopped its relief valve from releasing butane into the atmosphere. The tank was being filled with butane at

the time the relief valve was continuously popping, OSHA said.

— Inadequately sized openings used in relief valves on several tanks.

— Violations of the National Electrical Code.

Citations for alleged serious violations of federal health standards involved exposure of employees to excessive amounts of lead, improper handling of asbestos materials, and inadequate controls of asbestos fibers in the atmosphere.

The company was directed to stop immediately all cited hazards.

Texas City Refining must pay the proposed penalties within 15 working days or contest OSHA's citations and penalties before the Occupational Safety Health Review Commission, an independent judicial agency responsible for reviewing such appeals.

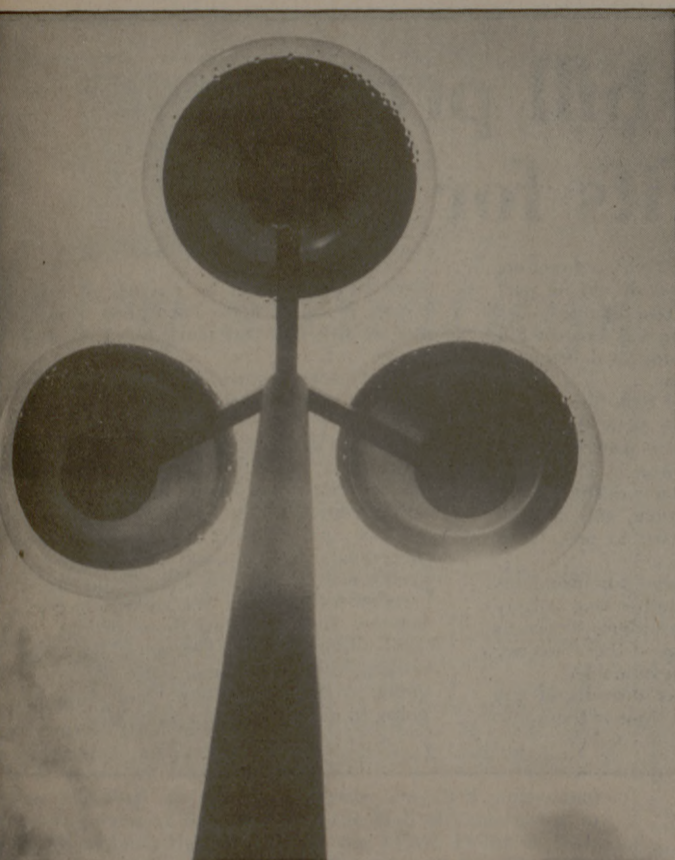
The company responded to the OSHA charges in a statement made by spokesman Rick Sherman.

"Due to the very short time the company has had to review these allegations, any in-depth comment at this time would be premature," Sherman said. "It should be pointed out that most of the alleged violations relate to conditions observed during the period im-

mediately following the fire and explosion and have no apparent bearing on the events of May 30.

"There is no allegation any person was injured as a result of these violations. It is significant that none is claimed to be the cause of the explosion. To that end the allegation will be thoroughly investigated. Where justification was found, immediate and corrective action will be taken.

"Where no justification for an allegation exists, that allegation will be disputed as provided by law."



Battalion photo by Mark Penny

Stoptlight of the future?

The futuristic appearance of a light pole on the mall west of the Chemistry Building was caused by the sun sneaking out from behind the clouds after a rain shower last week.

Ruling delayed on comatose girl's fate

Life supports may be removed

United Press International
HOUSTON — A state district judge Monday delayed ruling whether life-support systems keeping a comatose 12-year-old girl alive could be shut off.

Judge Wallace H. Miller ordered a scheduled hearing to be postponed after learning that Masil "Bunny" Gray might not survive the 48-hour delay requested by an attorney representing her mother, Nora A. Nixon.

The child, who became a county ward July 3, was admitted to Texas Children's Hospital July 16 unconscious from smoke inhalation. She had been pulled from a burning room at a Harris County welfare facility.

Riley Hetherington, attorney for Nixon, told the judge that on Sunday the child's blood pressure had dropped to 38, far below that which can support life. The child's brain waves registered flat. Doctors declared her medically dead.

"We would like to have time for the condition to stabilize, if it's going to," Hetherington told the judge. "Respiratory and cardiac functions could cease at any point."

Russell McMains, an attorney for the hospital, agreed to maintaining

the status quo.

The court initially was asked for a ruling on the matter because the Texas statute on legal death originates in common law and is considered confusing by legal scholars. The law considers only heartbeat and not the effects of life-support devices.

The judge on July 20 forbade the hospital from removing the child from her life-support systems. Another reason for granting the original injunction was that the child's natural father had not been located.

The child's mother had asked that the county become Bunny's guardian because the child had run away from home and her mother feared she was becoming delinquent.

July Hay, community relations director of Harris County Child Welfare, said the father had been contacted and both parents wanted custody of the child and control of the medical care, which they are providing.

"They are well aware of what is happening," Hay said. "They want to take it (custody) back. We will ask the court to return it."

Child abuse in Texas results in 129 deaths

United Press International
AUSTIN — The Texas Department of Human Resources reported Monday that 129 children died of abuse or neglect in Texas last year. Most of the victims were Anglo males from one to three years old, the agency said.

"It's hard to draw a picture of child abuse, but it exists," said Jerome Chapman, DHR commissioner.

"Thousands of Texas children are suffering from serious lack of care. At least 129 died of it last year. Others will be scarred physically and emotionally, affecting those children in the way they see them-

selves and the world around them."

Chapman said most of the abuse and neglect victims are mistreated by members of their family.

He said the department in 1977 had 42,347 reports of child abuse and neglect involving 90,000 children. More than half the deaths were caused by neglect, with lack of supervision as the most frequent cause. Medical and physical neglect such as malnutrition and abandonment were other leading causes of death.

DHR officials said only 18 persons were charged with child abuse and 15 were convicted.

Bar owners profit during long drought

United Press International
AUSTIN — The drought across Texas may be bad for farmers and ranchers, but it is provoking good business for bar owners, Comptroller Bob Bullock said Monday.

Bullock said state revenue from taxes on mixed drinks show drinks are selling in record numbers.

Texas consumed \$167 million in mixed drinks during the April-June quarter of this year, a 24 percent increase over the same period of last year. Total mixed drink sales for the first half of 1978 reached \$321 million, Bullock said.

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Danver's Ecraseurs

Wednesday, August 2
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