

Discovery of radiation leak leads company's officials to close plant

DALLAS (AP) — Ashland Chemical Co.'s electronic chemicals packaging plant here was ordered shut temporarily because of a radiation leak, and workers will be paid for low-level contamination, company officials said Sunday.

The leak is believed to have come from air guns used to remove dust particles from packaging bottles, officials said.

A radiation leak was discovered Thursday at the company's electronic chemicals packaging plant in Easton, Pa., and officials said Sunday that when they ran tests Saturday evening in Dallas, they discovered the same problem.

The air guns in Dallas are identical, officials said, to the static ionizer air cleaning units — leased from 3M Corp. — that were found to have failed at Ashland's packaging plant in Easton, about 60 miles north of Philadelphia.

Ashland said it immediately notified the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Texas Bureau of Radiological Health of the presence of the contamination at the Dallas facility.

An Ashland Chemical spokesman

said the company will test all employees of the contaminated facilities as a precautionary measure.

The Easton plant was closed over the weekend, and U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission spokesman Karl Abraham said the company signed an agreement not to open the plant without NRC approval. The Dallas plant also will be shut down until testing and cleanup is complete, officials said.

Preliminary tests show that contamination levels are not believed to pose a health threat to areas near the plants, officials said.

Officials shut down production at Easton Friday to test about 90 employees for low-level radiation contamination. An undetermined amount of polonium 210 leaked from at least one static ionizer used to clean bottles, officials said.

The microscopic polonium spheres give off alpha particles that cannot penetrate skin, but if the polonium is inhaled, it can find its way into the digestive tract and could eventually lead to cancer, Abraham said.

"There's a negligible hazard as external radiation, but it's a potentially serious matter if taken deep into the body," Abraham said.

Investigators are not sure how long the air gun has been leaking the radioactive material, although Abraham said clothing that hadn't been worn in several weeks or months was found contaminated.

Residents talk of police brutality

HEMPHILL (AP) — Some residents have related stories of violence in the hands of area law enforcement officials in the wake of a Louisiana man's death, two days after he allegedly was beaten in the Sabine county jail.

But others, including this East Texas town's only physician, dispute widespread rumors of police brutality.

Loyal Garner Jr., of Florien, La., said Dec. 27 in a Tyler hospital. He

and two companions were stopped and jailed in Hemphill for a traffic violation on Christmas Day.

The other two men said Garner was taken to an adjoining room, beaten and returned, unconscious, to his cell.

Police Chief Thomas Ladner, 33, and sheriff's deputies Bill Horton, 58, and James "Bo" Hyden, 34, have been charged with depriving Garner of his civil rights by beating him,

then denying him access to medical treatment.

The charges carry a maximum sentence of life in prison. The three men are free on \$25,000 bonds each and have been suspended from their duties.

Garner's family has filed suit against the three men, the city of Hemphill and Sabine County.

Leonard Green, 46, and Marvin "Chick" Stroud, 50, both of Hemphill, told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram they were handcuffed and beaten by Ladner several years ago.

Green, who was arrested for driving while intoxicated in 1980 and paid \$300 in fines for the DWI and disorderly conduct, said Garner's death stunned him.

"I thought, 'Good God, that could've been me,'" he said.

Green, who lost a leg in a shooting incident 20 years ago, said he told the FBI in Beaumont that he had been beaten but never heard back from the agent with whom he talked.

He said the contamination probably occurred at or before the last time the clothes were worn.

Abraham also said that bottles that are cleaned with the air guns and contain acids or solvents may be contaminated.

The NRC and Ashland tried to determine over the weekend where the bottles were sent so they could be tested. Abraham said all of the products are restricted in industrial use.

About 90 workers at the Easton plant will submit urine samples for analysis, officials said. "We don't know how long it will take to get those done, but we'll expedite the process," said Brent McGinnis, Ashland spokesman.

Abraham said exits from the buildings in the Easton plant that had areas of contamination were tested and indicated none of the material left the area.

What's Up

Monday

UNIVERSITY ART EXHIBITS: will present eighteenth century views by Canaletto Thursday through Feb. 20 in Rudder Exhibit Hall.

PHI THETA KAPPA ALUMNI: will meet at 7:30 p.m. in 507 AB Rudder.

ALPHA KAPPA PSI: will have an informational rush meeting at 7 p.m. at the Kyle Field press box.

TAMU JAZZ BAND: will rehearse at 7:30 p.m. in the Commons west piano room. New members are welcome.

HIGH SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS AND RECRUITMENT: will meet at 5:30 p.m. in 225 MSC to turn in brochures from the high school trip.

AGGIE CINEMA: will have a new members' meeting at 7 p.m. in 510 Rudder.

BAYLOR LAW SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS: are being offered to outstanding Texas A&M students entering Baylor Law School. Contact Dr. J.M. Nance in 560 Harrington for more information. Application deadline is Feb. 1.

AMA MARKETING SOCIETY: will meet at 7 p.m. in Blocker Building. Check the monitor screen for the room number.

MSC VARIETY SHOW: audition applications are available in 216 MSC.

HONORS STUDENT COUNCIL: will meet at 7:30 p.m. in 410 Rudder.

Tuesday

TEXAS A&M FLYING CLUB: will meet at 7 p.m. in the clubhouse at Eastwood Airport.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR INDUSTRIAL DISTRIBUTION: will meet at 7:15 p.m. in 103 Zachry. Dr. Workman will be the guest speaker.

DATA PROCESSING MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION: will meet at 7 p.m. at the Ramada Inn penthouse suite for an Exxon presentation on careers in data processing.

MSC FRESHMEN LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS: applications are available in 216 MSC and are due Friday.

DELTA SIGMA PI: will have a professional speaker at 7 p.m. in 302 Rudder. All business students are welcome. Business attire is requested.

INTRAMURALS: Basketball and pre-season basketball entries close. For more information contact P.J. Miller at 845-7826.

THE BIG EVENT COMMITTEE: will meet at 7 p.m. in 203 MSC.

DEER PARK HOMETOWN CLUB: will meet at 8:30 p.m. in 502 Rudder.

MSC CEPHEID VARIABLE: will meet at 8:30 p.m. in 225 MSC.

MICROBIOLOGY SOCIETY: will meet at 7 p.m. in 027 MSC.

AUSTIN HOMETOWN CLUB: will meet at 8:30 p.m. in 027 MSC.

PHI ETA SIGMA: applications are due Feb. 15 and March 1. Scholarship applications for seniors are available in 113 System.

TAMU POLO CLUB: will meet at 8:30 p.m. in 208 MSC.

POLITICAL SCIENCE SOCIETY/PI SIGMA ALPHA: will meet at 7 p.m. in 229 MSC.

SALVADORAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION: will meet at 8:30 p.m. in 302 Rudder.

MSC TRAVEL: will meet at 8:30 p.m. in Rudder Tower. Check monitor screen for room number.

THE FREEDOM SOCIETY: will meet at 8:30 p.m. in Rudder Tower. Check the monitor screen for the room number.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE ORGANIZATION: will meet at 7 p.m. in All Faiths Chapel meditation room.

MSC ALL NIGHT FAIR: will meet at 8:30 p.m. in 230 MSC.

COLLEGIATE FFA: will have a kolache social at 6:45 p.m. and a meeting at 7:30 p.m. in 208 Scoates.

TAMU SCUBA CLUB: will meet at 7 p.m. in 228 MSC.

TAMU SAILING TEAM: will meet at 7 p.m. in 109 Trigon.

Items for What's Up should be submitted to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, no later than three business days before the desired run date. We only publish the name and phone number of the contact if you ask us to do so. What's Up is a Battalion service that lists non-profit events and activities. Submissions are run on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no guarantee an entry will run. If you have questions, call the newsroom at 845-3315.

DPS tries to stop counterfeit of IDs with new licenses

By Mary-Lynne Rice
Staff Writer

To combat the use of false identification by minors, the Texas Department of Public Safety has started to issue driver's licenses with a new, more distinctive multi-color look.

With the alterations to the design of the licenses, the DPS expects the cards to be much more difficult to counterfeit.

However, unless an already-licensed driver duplicates or renews his license, he might not receive the new card for another four years, Mike Cox, DPS spokesman, said.

"There's no requirement at all to go in and have a new picture taken," he said. "The old licenses are completely acceptable."

The new licenses will feature several hindrances to counterfeiting, he said.

Changes include printing the state seal at the top of the license in green and partially superimposing it onto the photograph.

"That's just one of several steps to make it more inconvenient to alter or counterfeit the license," he said.

Among other changes, on top of the lettering identifying the DPS, "Texas" will be printed in hollow red letters.

The feature of the license most difficult to counterfeit, Cox said, is the DPS seal embossed on the card.

"There's a barely visible embossing of the DPS state seal all around

the card," he said. "Again, that will make it extra difficult to alter the driver's license."

However, Sisco Spence, manager of the College Station Hilton's Sundance Club, said the new licenses probably will not deter many minors from attempting to use false identification.

"When someone invents a wheel, someone else is going to invent a way of going around that wheel in a different fashion," he said. "I don't think there is any way to foolproof an ID. There are other ways of going around it."

He cited out-of-state licenses as a common fake-ID ploy.

"Most of the doormen are unfamiliar with (the licenses of) other states," he said. "It's a little harder to catch what you're unfamiliar with."

Even more difficult to identify, Spence said, are false licenses from out of the country.

"If you have a doorman who is not bilingual, he can read the name and the birthdate, and that's about it," he said.

Cox said the DPS realizes the new licenses are not impossible to counterfeit, although it will be very difficult. Those caught using false licenses, however, will face a stiff penalty for forgery and counterfeiting.

DPS Sgt. John Raney said counterfeiting is a third-degree felony, punishable by a term of two to five years in the state penitentiary.

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