Flooded Crosby, Texas, Chemical Plant Explodes Twice

*More explosions possible*

(NBC) Crosby, Texas — Two explosions shook a flooded chemical plant near Houston early Thursday, sending a plume of black smoke into the air and triggering an intense fire that continued to burn. Authorities warned that further blasts were likely to occur on site since chemicals weren't being stored at the appropriate temperatures after the facility lost power following Hurricane Harvey.

Residents in a 1.5-mile radius of the Arkema Inc. plant were first evacuated Tuesday, and the water levels there remain too dangerous for workers to assess the situation from the ground, officials added. The smoke that was emanating from the facility irritated the eyes and throats of more than a dozen law enforcement officers who were monitoring the scene, said Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez. Some of them went to the hospital out of precaution.

The plant manufactures organic peroxides commonly used in everyday products like kitchen countertops, industrial paints, polystyrene cups and plates, and PVC piping. The materials must be kept very cool, otherwise there is "the potential for a chemical reaction leading to a fire and/or explosion within the site confines," Arkema said. Without power or backup generators running at the site, the organic peroxides stored inside nine containers — described as 18-wheeler box vans — warmed to dangerous levels, officials said. Arkema Group, one of the world's largest chemical companies, had warned Wednesday that the plant would catch fire at some point — adding that there was nothing to stop it.


Volunteering and Donations for Disaster Areas

*Do Not Self-Deploy!*

(From AHA) FEMA is asking individuals and organizations interested in volunteering or donating supplies to register through the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster or Texas VOAD using this webpage. Hospital employees, doctors and other health care professionals who are interested in volunteering also should register through the VOAD so officials can determine the best use of resources.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott has temporarily suspended all necessary statutes and rules to allow health care providers employed by a hospital and licensed and in good standing in another state to practice in Texas in order to assist with the Harvey disaster response operations. Hospitals must submit to the applicable licensing entity each out-of-state provider's name, provider type, state of license and license identification number. See specific instructions for hospital-affiliated providers and non-hospital affiliated physicians and providers on this webpage. For nurses, see the licensing procedures on the Texas Board of Nursing webpage. FEMA and the Department of Health and Human Services request that health care providers not self-deploy to impacted areas.


Veteran Houston police officer drowned responding to flooding

(Washington Post) Houston officials said Tuesday that Sgt. Steve Perez, 60, a veteran Houston police officer, drowned Sunday night while driving on duty in the floodwater. "He laid down his life," Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo said during a briefing Tuesday afternoon. "He was a sweet, gentle public servant." [Read more »](#)
AHA Working with Texas, Louisiana Hospital Associations and Member Organizations

(AHA - Aug 29) Since last week, the AHA has been in close communication with the Texas and Louisiana hospital associations. AHA team members have worked with staff at the Texas Hospital Association, serving as a liaison with federal relief agencies. The American Society for Healthcare Engineering – an AHA personal membership group – has been in contact with several of their individual members in the affected areas and will work with them to provide assistance to specific hospital infrastructure issues as they arise. In addition, ASHE will coordinate with hospital engineers throughout the country to provide materials and share expertise to ensure facilities are functional and safe for patients.

- Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price signed a public health emergency declaration for Texas and Louisiana, authorizing the use of Section 1135 waivers of certain Medicare and Medicaid regulations. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is coordinating the requests and approvals to use these waivers. CMS's webpage includes details on how to apply for an 1135 waiver.
- Texas Governor Greg Abbott has temporarily suspended all necessary statutes and rules to allow healthcare providers employed by a hospital and licensed and in good standing in another state to practice in Texas in order assist with the Harvey disaster response operations. Hospitals must submit to the applicable licensing entity each out-of-state provider's name, provider type, state of license and license identification number.

Texas Hospital Employee Assistance

Texas Hospital Association (THA) has created the THA Hospital Employee Assistance Fund to assist hospital employees who experienced significant property loss or damage. While thousands of hospital colleagues work around the clock to serve emergency response efforts, their families are being affected by this historic storm and flooding damage.

For more info: https://www.tha.org/Harvey/AssistanceFund

New research on violence against EMS responders

(US Fire Admin) When responding to emergency medical calls, threats of violence to EMS workers can come from patients, family members, or even bystanders. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 2,600 EMS workers received hospital treatment in 2014 for injuries resulting from work-related violence.

Last year, researchers published an article that investigated injuries to paramedics and emergency medical technicians from patient-initiated violence. These EMS workers were employed by a large, urban fire department.

You can read about the research findings and download the complete article on the USFA's website.

HSIN Supports Safety and Security for 30,000 Attendees at Scout Jamboree

(DHS) HSIN helped facilitate the security of over 30,000 attendees at the 2017 National Scout Jamboree (NSJ), held July 19 to 28 near Glen Jean, West Virginia. President Trump, joined by several members of his cabinet, spoke at the event on July 24.

During the event, HSIN provided an information sharing platform and capabilities needed to support interagency collaboration.

The team also used mapping tools created with the assistance of NPPD. The infrastructure visualization platform provided data that was integrated into HSIN, enabling analysts to zoom in to view video and other data on the venue.

A Fatal Outbreak of ST11 Carbapenem-Resistant Hypervirulent *Klebsiella pneumonia* in a Chinese Hospital: A Molecular Epidemiology Study (The Lancet) Hypervirulent *Klebsiella pneumoniae* strains often cause life-threatening community-acquired infections in young and healthy hosts, but are usually sensitive to antibiotics. In this study, we investigated a fatal outbreak of ventilator-associated pneumonia caused by a new emerging hypervirulent *K pneumoniae* strain. Go to article

Congress Should Gear Up for the Health Impacts Post-Harvey (The Hill) Five years ago this fall, the sky over Manhattan darkened, rain fell, and the water rose; and rose; and rose. Superstorm Sandy caused significant flooding in the nation’s most populous city, which ultimately killed more than 100 people and caused $70 billion in damages. Go to article

Evacuees Crowd Intro Shelters as Harvey Soaks Louisiana (The Wall Street Journal) As the Houston region begins to emerge from Harvey’s beating, communities in eastern Texas and Louisiana are struggling to handle thousands of evacuees displaced by record rainfalls that have submerged entire towns. Go to article

Five Public Health Crises Facing Houston After Harvey (The Hill) Texas is reeling from Hurricane Harvey, with thousands of residents displaced by flood waters and a climbing death toll. But the dangers go beyond the rising waters, as the storm brings an array of public health dangers, from mosquitoes to mold. Go to article

‘This is Surreal’: Houston Dialysis Center Struggles to Treat Patients (NPR) Among the most pressing medical needs facing Houston at the moment: getting people to dialysis treatment. At DaVita Med Center Dialysis on Tuesday afternoon, nurses tended to dozens of patients on dialysis machines while another 100 people waited their turn. Some were clearly uncomfortable, and a number said they hadn't been dialyzed in 4 days. Go to article

Hospitals Scramble as Harvey Forces Patient Evacuations (Houston Chronicle) The story on Monday for Houston's massive medical infrastructure became one of frantic logistics as the rains continued to fall and hospital leaders scrambled to stay one step ahead of the rising waters. At least a dozen hospitals across the region began the painstaking work of evacuation, methodically emptying floor after floor of patients, the sickest ones first, who were then shuffled into ambulances and taken to sister hospitals in the hope of higher ground. Go to article

Treating Patients at Houston’s Largest Emergency Shelter, as Hurricane Harvey Rages (New Yorker) Here in Houston, a patient shivering in August is never a good sign. On Monday, as Hurricane Harvey brought its third day of catastrophic rain to southeastern Texas, a steady procession of refugees sloshed into the George R. Brown Convention Center, the city's largest emergency shelter. They were cold and wet. Many couldn't stop shaking. I had been scheduled to work a shift at Ben Taub Hospital, where I am an internist, but flooding there had forced a partial shutdown, so I spent the afternoon volunteering for the Red Cross instead, treating patients in one of the convention center's large halls. Go to article

Harvey Marks the Most Extreme Rain Event in US History (Washington Post) The rain from Harvey is in a class of its own. The storm has unloaded over 50 inches of rain east of Houston, the greatest amount ever recorded in the Lower 48 states from a single storm. And it's still raining. John Nielsen-Gammon, Texas state climatologist, said a rain gauge near Mont Belvieu at Cedar Bayou, about 40 miles east of Houston, had registered 51.9 inches of rain through late Tuesday afternoon. This total exceeds the previous record of 48 inches set during tropical cyclone Amelia in Medina, Texas in 1978. Go to article

Tropical Storm Harvey Will Cost Tens of Billions of Dollars (Wall Street Journal) Tropical Storm Harvey will take a financial toll on the nation’s economy, but how much of one depends on the extent of flooding in the coming days. Even after the immediate threat from Harvey has passed and the floodwaters receded, the Texas Gulf Coast faces tens of billions of dollars in property damage,
bottlenecks at some of the nation’s largest oil refineries, and work disruptions possibly for millions of workers.  

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A new strain of ransomware targets healthcare; cyberattack causes disruptions at NHS hospital (Britain)  
(Fierce Healthcare) Cybersecurity analysts have uncovered a previously undocumented strain of ransomware aimed at the healthcare industry and spread through targeted phishing emails that contain a malicious attachment.

The ransomware virus known as Defray was discovered by researchers at Proofpoint, a global cybersecurity vendor. In a blog post last week, the company said the attack is different than the “spray-and-pray” campaigns that emerged over the last several months. Instead, attackers sent targeted, customized messages to potential victims. The virus is spread through a Microsoft Word attachment.

Read more:  http://www.fiercehealthcare.com/privacy-security/a-new-strain-ransomware-targets-healthcare-another-cyberattack-causes-disruptions

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AT&T to expand 5G U.S. broadband trials  
AT&T Inc said on Wednesday that it is expanding its 5G trials to include three new U.S. cities by the end of the year as part of its push to develop a next-generation network.

Read more:  http://www.reuters.com/article/us-at-t-5g-idUSKCN1BA1C4

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Healthcare Coalition Conference  
September 26-29  
Lexington, KY

The 2017 Healthcare Coalition Conference welcomes those who work in and service the following healthcare fields: Engineering/Facilities, Security/Safety and Purchasing/Materials Management!

New this year! The exhibit hall will be open two days:

- Wednesday, Trade Show Reception, 3:30 - 6:30 pm
- Thursday, Exhibit Hall Luncheon, 11:45 am - 1:45 pm

Quick Links  
Registration  
Agenda  
Golf Tournament

The KHREF Emergency Preparedness Update is assembled several times a week. When events make it necessary, the Update may be sent out several times a day to keep our hospital and the healthcare community advised on preparedness news and information. Most of this information is compiled from open sources, and where possible reference links will be provided. There is an archive of Emergency Preparedness Updates available here. If you would like to added or deleted, or have something you would like to contribute to a future edition of the Emergency Preparedness Update, please contact preparedness@kyha.com (include your current email address). The preparedness program for the Kentucky Hospital Association (KHA) and KHREF are supported by US DHHS ASPR HPP funds through a contract with Kentucky Public Health.