

Secondary Containment Case Study



A lightning strike at a saltwater disposal system near Cresson sent flames and thick, black smoke billowing high into the sky shortly before 7 Thursday night.

The fire destroyed 10 Saltwater Storage tanks and a small office building at the Texas Transco Inc.

The facility is an injection disposal site for salt-water waste from gas wells. No injuries were reported and no trucks parked at the location were damaged. The Facility is located about one mile southeast of Highway 377 off Highway 171 near county road 1000.

Cresson VFD fire chief Larry Ingram said that lightning caused an explosion and fire when it struck one of the fiberglass storage tanks during a heavy thunderstorm about 6:50 p.m.

"The storage tanks burned through the night, Ingram said, by 8 a.m. Friday firefighters were applying foam on occasional flare-ups.

Highway 171 was closed as a precaution for about two hours after the lightning strike, Ingram Said. "There was one tank that didn't burn, and we wanted to make sure that we weren't going to have another explosion."

Bobby Price, owner of Texas Transco Inc., said the storage tanks contained saltwater production waste, with some gas and oil mixed in.

"The waste comes in by truck and is put in the tanks. From the tanks, the saltwater waste is pumped into a 10,000-foot-deep disposal well," Price said from his office in East Texas.

Price said three trucks and their drivers were at the facility when lightning hit, but no one was hurt.

"I talked to one of our truck drivers who was coming down a nearby county road. He said he saw a big bolt of lightning come down. Then he saw the flash and the fire."

Price said the fire destroyed the storage tanks, but did not reach the waste that was already injected into the underground disposal well. Texas Transco has another disposal facility at White Oak near Longview, Price said.

Ramona Nye, spokeswoman for the Texas Railroad Commission, said an investigator would visit the site Friday to look for any pollution issues. Price said the emergency containment wall around the tanks "held the fluid exactly the way it was supposed to. We didn't lose anything." Granbury and Godley VFDs assisted Cresson at the fire.

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