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Multiple tanks burn at Deer Park chemical facility

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Officials maintained Monday that the air remains safe as a fire at a Deer Park chemical facility is still burning more than 24 hours after it started.

The fire at the Intercontinental Terminal Co. facility started with two tanks about 10:30 a.m. Sunday and spread to an additional five tanks by Monday morning. Officials said Monday afternoon that the number of tanks burning was down to six, and three of those are starting to "settle down."

However, a temporary loss of water pressure overnight caused the blaze to spread to two additional tanks, bringing the total back up to eight Tuesday morning.

Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo, flanked by other county officials, said that both station and mobile air quality monitoring is being conducted to determine when the public might need to be warned. ITC officials identified the company conducting mobile monitoring as the Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health, LLC.

DOCUMENT: CTEH report compiled at 8 a.m. released by ITC

[https://media.click2houston.com/document_dev/2019/03/18/Air%20Monitoring%20Summary%2003-18%200800_1552943596044_21591385_ver1.0.pdf]

Jeff Lindner, the county's meteorologist, said that winds blowing from the east are pushing the plume to the west. He said that the plume was at an elevation of nearly 4,000 feet above Houston, but that will likely lower to about 400 feet by Tuesday morning.

Lindner said that the quality of the air would become a problem if the plume made it to the ground.

Watch the video below to hear KPRC2 chief meteorologist explain how the wind and weather will affect the fire and the smoke. [<http://How wind and weather will affect Deer Park fire>]

According to officials at ITC, the chemicals that are burning are components of gasoline. One of the tanks also contains a chemical called naphtha that is a component of nail polish remover and paint thinner.

RELATED: What chemicals are burning? [<https://www.click2houston.com/news/whats-burning-at-the-chemical-plant-in-deer-park>]

Despite the black smoke pouring from the plant, ITC officials insist that the air is safe.

“We continue monitoring the air quality in and around the area, in several locations, as of this time, they’re still within normal range,” said Davis Wascome, vice president of operations for ITC. “It’s something that we’re monitoring.”

Deer Park officials lifted a shelter-in-place order for residents in the aftermath of the fire, saying no air quality tests have exceeded action levels.

VIDEO: KPRC2 reporter Sally Mamdooh gives [<https://www.click2houston.com/video/deer-park-fire-not-expected-to-end-for-two-days>] **update** [<https://www.click2houston.com/video/deer-park-fire-not-expected-to-end-for-two-days>] **on Deer Park fire** [<https://www.click2houston.com/video/deer-park-fire-not-expected-to-end-for-two-days>]

Fire officials said the blaze will continue to burn until the fuel is gone or removed from the tank. That process is underway at one of the tanks.

“Pumping operations to reduce the amount of combustible material in the tank containing naphtha are ongoing,” said Alice Richardson, spokeswoman for ITC.

VIDEO: Officials provide [<https://www.click2houston.com/video/monday-morning-update-on-deer-park-fire>] **update** [<https://www.click2houston.com/video/monday-morning-update-on-deer-park-fire>] **on Deer Park fire** [<https://www.click2houston.com/video/monday-morning-update-on-deer-park-fire>]

The fire could burn for as long as two days, a fire official said Monday.

The cause of the blaze is under investigation.

PHOTOS: Your photos of the Deer Park fire [<https://www.click2houston.com/slideshow/photos-fire-reported-at-itc-deer-park>]

Katy resident James Williams lives for than 50 miles away from the fire but said that he thought twice about his afternoon walk when looked up into the sky.

'I think it would be a sunny day if it weren't for all the smoke coming from deer park, " said Williams, "Its bad."

Other residents noticed it too and sent KPRC photos of the plum along Mason Road and West Park.

"I knew, I knew it was that I just didn't realize that it was reaching this far you know," said Katy Resident, Dary Hernandez.

According to Harris County Pollution Control, they received complaints about the smoke and smell in the area near Katy Freeway and Grand Parkway.

Representatives told KPRC they logged the complaint and sent a crew to investigate. TCEQ is testing in the area. The City of Houston sent out an alert that the Houston Health Department is conducting air monitoring in the neighborhoods near Deer Park.

About ITC

ITC Deer Park's website [<http://www.item.com/>] says it "has provided safe and reliable terminal services to the petrochemical industry for over four decades" and operates two terminals in Houston.

The Deer Park terminal currently has "3.1 million barrels (2.2 million cbm) of capacity in 242 tanks. It stores all kinds of petrochemical liquids and gases, as well as fuel oil, bunker oil and distillates. The terminal has five ship docks and ten barge docks, rail and truck access, as well as multiple pipeline connections."

Governor's statement

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott released the following statement about the fire:

"The State of Texas and the Texas Department of Emergency Management are closely monitoring the fire at the Intercontinental Terminal in Deer Park and are in close consultation with local officials.

"The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, in coordination with Harris County, is monitoring the air quality. I have ordered that all state resources be made available to local and industry officials and urge residents to continue heeding the warnings of local officials."

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