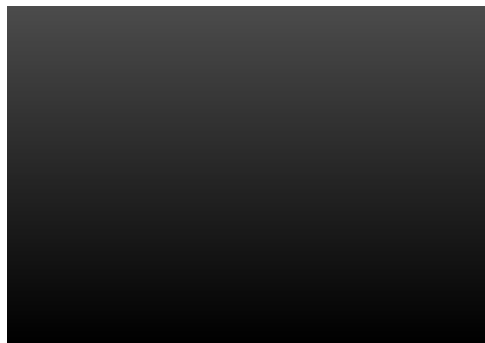


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Early Morning Explosion Triggers East Bay Refinery Fire



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NEWARK, Calif. -- The failure of a heat exchange unit at the Evergreen Oil company refinery triggered an early Tuesday morning explosion, fire and release of hydrochloric acid, according to a plant official.

While there was a major response to the fire to the refinery located near Cherry and Smith Avenues, officials said, there was no danger to local residents and no need for a shelter-in-place order.

Two employees at the plant were performing a routine task at around 5:30 a.m. when there was some sort of equipment failure, Alameda County fire spokeswoman Aisha Knowles said.

The equipment failure caused the released of hydrocarbon, which then caught fire, she said.

The heat from the fire melted a nearby fiberglass tank containing hydrochloric acid, and the acid spilled into a contained area, Knowles said.

The plant official said one employee had suffered an arm injury and was taken to a local hospital for treatment.

Martha Delgadillo was working at the plant at the time of the explosion.

"I heard a boom," she told KTVU. "The window vibrated and an alarm went off. I grabbed my purse, grabbed my jacket, my keys and I was out of there."

Evergreen Oil, Inc. is one of the largest waste oil collectors in California, and the only oil re-refining operation in the western United States.

Evergreen is also a major provider of hazardous waste services, offering customers across the state a full range of environmental services to handle all of their waste management needs

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