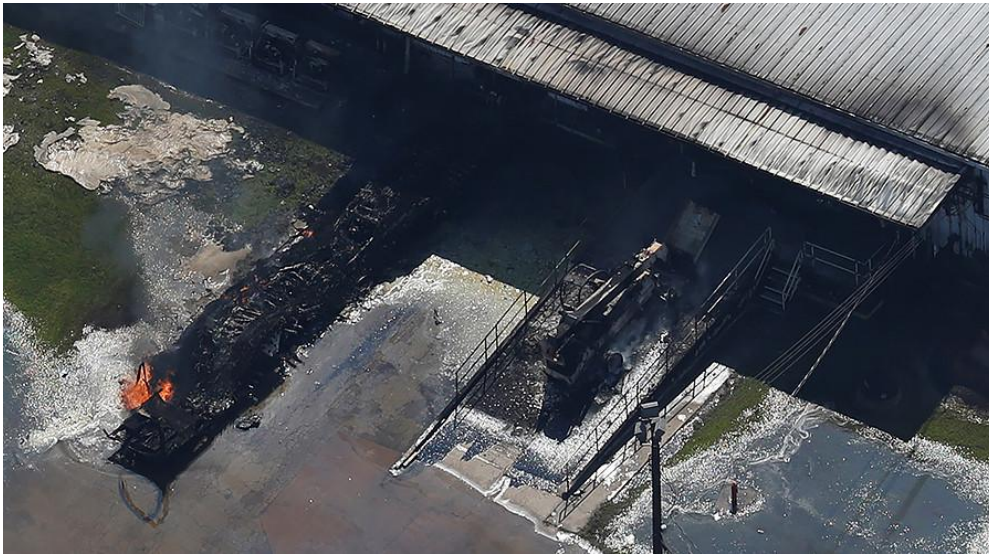


# Explosion at Arkema chemical plant in Crosby, Texas causes massive fire (VIDEO)

Published time: 1 Sep, 2017 22:40

Edited time: 2 Sep, 2017 12:39



A fire burns at the flooded plant of French chemical maker Arkema SA after Tropical Storm Harvey passed in Crosby, Texas, U.S. August 31, 2017. © Adrees Latif / Reuters

Towering flames and clouds of black smoke have overtaken much of the Arkema chemical plant in Crosby, Texas, after extensive flooding caused by Hurricane Harvey forced an evacuation of the facility.

Late Friday evening, a representative with Arkema told RT America that the fire is not out yet, but it is *“in the last stages of smoldering.”*

A representative with Arkema Inc. told RT America that a fire, which caused noxious plumes of black smoke to tower over Crosby, Texas on Friday, has is not yet extinguished, but is *“in the last stages of smoldering.”*

The fire erupted after two refrigerated trailers containing chemicals became too hot and combusted, Richard Rennard, president of acrylic monomers business for Arkema, said in a [press conference](#).

There are another six trailers at the plant, which Rennard said do not have refrigeration capabilities. He added that officials *“fully expect the same thing to happen with those containers that we saw today.”*

Bob Royall, assistant chief of emergency operations for the Harris County Fire Marshal's Office, said that they were first notified about the incident by fire and law enforcement units at the plant, who said there was a column of white smoke coming from inside the facility. That smoke later turned to a light-brown color and eventually to a dark black.

Royall said that the fire spread from one of the trailers to a second trailer, resulting in two of the remaining trailers burning. There are now only six trailers remaining at the plant.

*"You could call this a warning sign that more explosions or fires could be coming soon,"* Jeff Carr, a spokesman for Arkema, told the Houston Chronicle.

This is the second trailer at the Arkema chemical plant in Crosby, Texas to catch on fire, sending plumes of noxious black smoke into the air Friday. **Two smaller explosions** at the chemical plant occurred Thursday.

The smoke could be seen in the residential Newport area of Crosby, about 7 miles away. Harris County officials are advising residents who did not evacuate the 1.5-mile area around the plant to close their windows and turn off their air conditioning systems.





Hazardous materials crews were headed to the scene.



Rachel Moreno at the Harris County Fire Marshal's Office told RT America that the explosion was a result of the product inside the trailers reaching its combustion state, which is causing the black smoke.



She said that residents should be safe if they adhere to the one-and-a-half mile evacuation zone, and advised those who are near the site to shelter in place, close all their windows and turn off their air conditioning.

Moreno said no change was made to the evacuation zone. She added that emergency responders will not put the fire out, but wait for it to burn itself out.

On Friday, Arkema released a [statement](#) that confirmed Harris County emergency officials have maintained a one-and-a-half-mile evacuation perimeter around the plant.

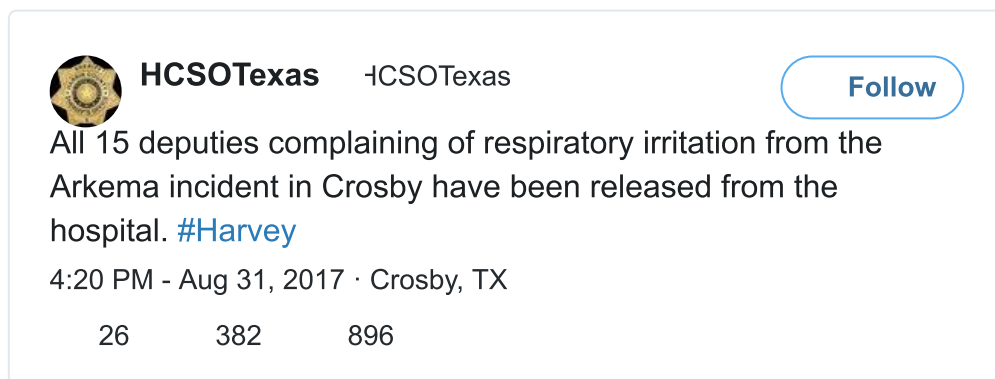
The company added that additional incidents were “*likely*” and said that the best course of action is to “*let the fire burn itself out.*”

They warned residents not to return to the evacuation zone until local authorities announce it is safe.

This is the second of nine trailers at the plant that has caught fire. The trailers each contain liquid organic peroxides, which needs to be cooled to a certain temperature, otherwise it will explode.

Officials said that three of the nine trailers have lost power, [according](#) to KPRC.

On Thursday, the Harris County Sheriff's Office tweeted that 15 deputies were “*complaining of respiratory irritation from the Arkema incident.*” They have since been released from the hospital.



The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) released a [joint statement](#) that said they are monitoring the smoke and air quality and the potential for additional fires in the area. They also said there are “*aerial assets ready to be deployed*” in the area if needed.

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The agencies said that after consulting with local and federal response managers, they have concluded that the safest course of action would be to *“allow the remaining containers to catch fire, rather than try to send people to move them or put firefighters and first responders directly in harm’s way.”*

In a conference call with reporters on Friday, Arkema President and CEO Rich Rowe said he fully expects the remaining trailers to catch fire, adding the best course of action would be to let the trailers *“burn out.”*

*“The only recourse is to let the eight containers burn out,”* Rowe said, [according](#) to ABC News. *“It’s*

*500,000 pounds of material; let that material burn out."*

The plant produces plastic resins used to manufacture items for a wide array of products.