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Fire halts operations at Pemex's Salina Cruz refinery

HOUSTON, June 16

2-3 minutes

Pemex Transformacion Industrial (formerly Pemex Refinacion), the processing arm of Mexico's state-owned [Petroleos Mexicanos SA](http://www.petrobras.com.br), has extinguished a fire that broke out on June 14 at its 330,000-b/d Antonio Dovalí Jaime refinery in Salina Cruz, Oaxaca.

Pemex's firefighting staff, which completely extinguished the 2-day long fire on June 16 at about 3:30 a.m. local time, is continuing to operate sprinkler equipment in the refinery's impacted areas to assist in the cooling process as well as to prevent the fire from restarting or spreading, the company said.

With the fire now quenched, Pemex currently is awaiting assurance the affected area is safe for reentry in order to assess damage and determine a plan of action for resuming operations at the refinery, which remains shuttered.

While it did not disclose details regarding a timeframe for the refinery's restart, Pemex did confirm it has implemented various measures to ensure ongoing fuel supplies to customers in the region.

In addition to safely restarting the refinery, Pemex also will be

asked to contract an independent third party to conduct a root-cause investigation of the incident, Mexican regulator La Agencia de Seguridad, Energía y Ambiente (ASEA) said in a statement.

ASEA has been on site at the refinery since June 15 to ensure remediation activities are in compliance with national industrial safety and environmental standards.

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Incident details

The June 14 fire occurred following Pemex's coordinated suspension of processing activities at the Salina Cruz refinery after torrential rains from Tropical Storm Calvin caused flooding in several areas of the refinery, Pemex said.

Rising floodwaters in the containment dam of a crude oil storage tank resulted in an oil spill that subsequently ignited, sparking a fire in the containment dam that later spread to the refinery's pump room, according to separate releases from Pemex and ASEA.

The fire—part of which Pemex firefighters were able to extinguish on June 15 in the western and southern zones of the storage area—led to one fatality and several injuries.

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