



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

December 2011



The aftermath of the van blast in Melbourne Photo: stuff.co.nz

**Hazmat 2012
May 9 & 10
Melbourne
AIDGC will be
there!**

**Any volunteers to
help out on the
stand would be
most welcome..**

Plumber Killed as Van Explodes

A Melbourne plumber died after his van loaded with gas cylinders exploded - a leaking gas cylinder in the back of the 25-year-old tradesman's van is believed to have caused the explosion, but it is unclear what triggered it. The force of the blast blew the sides and roof off the van and threw the man about five metres, spraying shards of metal and glass over a 100m radius.

Detective Senior Constable Cashman from the arson and explosives squad praised passers-by who came to the young tradesman's aid and said he was amazed no one else was killed. "A lot of people tended to the victim in the immediate aftermath of the initial explosion and is a credit to them and remarkably brave considering the vehicle was still experiencing a number of smaller explosions and eventually caught fire as well."

The explosion damaged windows and roofs on up to 20 nearby homes and was heard 5km away, Senior Constable Cashman said. "The first fire brigade on scene actually heard the explosion from their shed". Some residents in Stadium Circuit told police they had heard a hissing sound coming from the back of the van.

The plumber, who specialized in air conditioning or refrigeration work, kept up to seven gas cylinders in the back of his vehicle. WorkSafe director of dangerous goods Jarrod Edwards said the cylinders contained LPG, acetylene and refrigerants. Mr. Edwards said an electrical charge or a hot surface could have ignited the gas canisters, which should be secured in a cabinet with ventilation to the outside of a vehicle.

Source: Canberra Times



Orica says new equipment will be installed at the site of the latest leak from its Newcastle plant. Photo: ABC TV



Chemicals manufacturer Incitec Pivot has announced plans to expand into explosives, and is reassuring locals living near its Newcastle ammonium nitrate plant in the wake of Orica's Kooragang Island leaks.

In late October the company, which manufactures explosives through its subsidiary Dyno Noble, met with locals over its planned ammonium nitrate plant. At the time Incitec said it would carry out an open consultation, with expectations of a year-long feasibility study.

The proposed plant will create around 300 jobs during its construction, and 60 positions once up-and-running.

Regulatory approvals manager Graham Woods has said that as the plant does not include ammonia manufacturing it will not be using hexavalent chromium, the chemical which leaked from Orica's plant.

Photo and Source: Newcastle Herald

Computer Blamed for Latest Orica Leak

Chemical company Orica has blamed a failed computer card for the latest leak from its Newcastle plant. An hazardous materials unit was among several fire trucks called to the Kooragang Island site when about 20,000 litres of ammonium nitrate escaped from a tank.

Orica insists the leaked solution posed no risk to the public and was equivalent to garden fertilizer.

The company says operations at the site will resume this morning, but the section of the plant where this spill occurred will remain closed while new equipment is installed. Orica has a team of specialists on hand to oversee the start-up of the nitric acid and ammonium nitrate plants.

The latest incident came just a day after the state's Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) gave Orica the green light to restart after another leak on November 9. The EPA said the November leak was the sixth from the site in a year. Community pressure on Orica and the State Government has been intense since the toxic chemical hexavalent chromium escaped from the plant in August.

Source: ABC News

Update - Orica Restarts Plant

Orica, the world's biggest explosives maker, said it has resumed production of ammonium nitrate at Kooragang Island in Australia, after the plant was shut down in November following a chemical leak.

Orica also said it is continuing with pre-start up testing on the ammonia plant, which has been shut since a leak of sodium chromate in August.

The two plant closures were costing the company A\$4 million a week, Orica said in November.

The ammonia plant remains closed, and is awaiting the lifting of a government order to close following the chemical leak.

Source: Reuters

Service Station Australia Magazine

The Spring 2011 issue is now available for download at:

http://ssa.org.au/magazine/2011_spring/index.php

The Newcastle Gas Storage Facility

has indicated notice of intention to apply for a pipeline licence. Source: SunHerald

AGL's Newcastle Gas Storage Facility (GSF)

will provide a safe and effective way to store natural gas, which is transported to Newcastle through existing gas pipelines between Sydney and Hexham. The Facility will have the capacity to store about two weeks' supply of gas for the Greater Newcastle region.

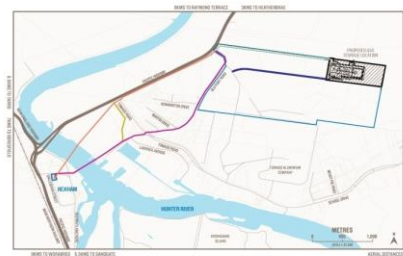
Installation of the GSF and associated infrastructure is estimated to cost about \$300 million. The construction phase will provide employment opportunities in the region, as it will need a workforce of up to 300 people. Operation of the GSF will create an estimated 15 permanent full-time jobs. The Newcastle GSF will comprise a refrigeration plant which cools natural gas to a liquid (LNG) at about minus 161°C, an LNG storage tank and re-gasification units that convert LNG back to pipeline quality gas. The GSF also requires a new gas pipeline connecting it to the existing network at Hexham.

For further information: agl.com.au/Downloads/NGSF_FactSheet_Final.pdf

U.S. EPA Plans for Next Cleanup Phase at Crown Cleaners Superfund Site in Herrings, N.Y.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has proposed a plan to demolish a building, dig up contaminated soil and sediment, and treat the ground water at the Crown Cleaners of Watertown, Inc. Superfund site in Herrings, New York. The soil, sediment and ground water are contaminated with volatile organic compounds and polyaromatic hydrocarbons from past operations at the former laundry and dry-cleaning facility. Volatile organic compounds can evaporate into the air and potentially impact people's health. Polyaromatic hydrocarbons are a group of chemicals that are formed during the incomplete burning of coal, oil, gas, wood, garbage or other organic substances. Exposure to these contaminants can have serious health impacts and increase the risk of cancer. Read Further:

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/0/79D00CB0659DB20385257964006C6929>



Newcastle GSF Environmental Assessment – Public Exhibition Submission can be viewed at ...

agl.com.au

**Congratulations to
Philip Turner
NSW
Who has added
Transportation to
his competencies**

New AIDGC Competency Assessments

A new competency classification has been added to the AIDGC website - Transport.

At this stage only two Members have attempted this assessment.

You will also notice that a further competency has been added - Classification - this is in anticipation of a proposed competency assessment that is being prepared and should be ready in early 2012.

Dangerous Goods & the Transport Industry – Reprinted from the May 2010 Newsletter

A candidate seeking to upgrade from Associate Member to Full Member status within the AIDGC and who only seeks listing under the member listing for dangerous goods ‘transport’, may do so by undertaking the assessment test. This will provide an avenue for those consultant Associate Members who provide advice in transport, packing and labeling, or any other ADG code-related matters, to be recognized as full Members of the AIDGC and have their contact details listed on the Member’s register.

A competency assessment module for transport matters has been developed and when undertaken with the other legislative and Code knowledge components, will enable the transition from Associate to Full member status to those candidates who successfully complete the assessment tasks and meet the Board’s membership criteria.

Many Full Members who are currently offering advice in transport matters, are subject to commitments made by them to adhere to the AIDGC Code of Conduct, fully entitled to continue to do so – there is no need to update their member listing to continue offering advice.

The opportunity does, however, exist for any current Full Members who offer services in dangerous goods transport related matters, to have that box ticked in the members listing on the website. This may be done by undertaking a competency assessment confined to dangerous goods transport matters only, the other membership requirements having already been met.

The assessment task can be undertaken by a mutually agreeable flexible arrangement. Anyone interested in the assessment for transport listing process, should contact Ross Underwood, sets@ozemail.com.au or by telephone, 0418223982, or any other Board Member (contact details on AIDGC website).

Tests Reveal Contaminated Water at NSW Coal Seam Gas Site??



Dirty water ... high levels of ammonia, methane, carbon dioxide, lithium, cyanide, bromide and boron were found near a coal seam gas operation. Photo: Ben Rushton Sydney Morning Herald

The state's first case of water contamination from coal seam gas drilling has been discovered in north-western NSW, according to independent tests. High levels of ammonia, methane, carbon dioxide, lithium, cyanide, bromide and boron were found around a water discharge point near a Santos coal seam gas operation in the Pilliga forest, near Narrabri. The state government last night confirmed it would conduct its own investigation and testing of the site. Water samples gathered by environment groups Friends of the Earth and The Wilderness Society were tested by East West EnviroAg, an independent laboratory in Tamworth that services agricultural and mining clients. It found samples from Bohena Creek, near a coal seam gas well discharge pipe, contained ammonia at three times the safe level recommended by drinking water guidelines. Upstream samples were uncontaminated. Santos, which took over the exploratory drilling site from Eastern Star Gas last month, said it had not seen the test results and had doubts about the credibility of the environment groups that collected the samples. It cited a NSW Office of Water study that said ammonia levels in the waterway were normally high, as a result of runoff from nitrate-based fertilizers. "Discharged water is tested on a monthly basis and all recent results have met NSW requirements," the company said in a statement. "Santos is confident it is not in breach of its authority or having any adverse impact on water resources in the area." The NSW Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services, which is responsible for regulating most aspects of the coal seam gas industry, yesterday launched its own investigation. The NSW Environment Protection Authority told the Herald it had also contacted the department and would follow up on the investigation. The water being discharged into Bohena Creek is pumped from deep underground during the drilling and gas extraction process, and is released into the creek under licence from the government after being treated by a reverse osmosis plant. The test results were released as the NSW parliamentary inquiry into coal seam gas conducted another hearing in Sydney. It heard from industry executives and engineers that there had been no known incidents of water pollution resulting from coal seam gas operations in the state.

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/water-issues/tests-reveal-contaminated-water-near-gas-site-20111208-1oldj.html#ixzz1qMmoQ2gq>



A mine in western Pennsylvania is depicted from the air in this photo. (Photo from Flickr user Marcellus Protest, cc-by-sa.)

U.S. EPA Acknowledges Link between Fracking & Well Pollution in Wyoming

The U.S Environmental Protection Agency has conducted a three-year study of wells in Wyoming near sites where hydraulic fracking has been conducted found extensive contamination and a possible link to the fracking process. It confirmed, for the first time, what critics of fracking, a controversial natural gas drilling practice, have long suspected: fracking can contaminate drinking water supplies.

The EPA's decision came after extensive testing of water wells in Wyoming where this practice has been widespread. Fracking involves injecting chemicals, sand and water into natural gas mines in an effort to force the gas out of the ground.

Source: Here & Now from WBUR in Boston

NSW Extends CSG Fracking Moratorium

The NSW government has extended until April 2012 a moratorium on the controversial fracking process used in coal seam gas (CSG) mining. Resources Minister Chris Hartcher announced the moratorium would be extended by four months pending the completion of an independent review. The announcement comes after a federal parliament Senate committee on Wednesday handed down an interim report on CSG mining, recommending a moratorium on all future CSG projects until further research is carried out.

"The NSW government recognizes significant recent community concern over the potential for pollution of aquifers by the coal seam gas industry as part of the fracking process," Mr. Hartcher said in a statement.

"That's why we're proceeding with caution and making sure the proper frameworks are in place for the protection of our aquifers, our environment and our prime agricultural land."Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, is a process by which miners inject water or other fluids into cracks in rock to extract gas and/or oil. The extended moratorium, which was scheduled to end on December 31, will allow for the review and strengthening of existing standards for fracking in NSW, Mr. Hartcher said. Fracking standards are to be reviewed by industry experts as well as the NSW chief scientist and engineer, Professor Mary O'Kane.

Source: AAP

Plans for a Multi Million-Dollar Gas Research Laboratory in Brisbane

The laboratory, which will be the first of its kind in Australia, will focus on studying unconventional gas technologies such as coal seam gas.

"This will further cement Queensland's position as a leading gas engineering, manufacturing and knowledge hub within the Asia-Pacific region," Premier Bligh said in a statement on Tuesday.

The laboratory, which is being funded by the world's largest oilfield service provider, Schlumberger, is scheduled to open in early 2012.

"The facility will house over \$2.5 million worth of specialized geotechnical equipment supporting industry-leading research focused largely on unconventional gas technologies," Bligh said.

She said the lab will create 23 full-time jobs in Brisbane and give local researchers the opportunity to work on world class projects.

Source: AAP NewsWire

Coal Seam Gas Drilling - Senate Report Suggests Suspension

A moratorium should be placed on most of the biggest new coal seam gas drilling plans in eastern Australia, and regulations governing pollution and land access significantly tightened, according to an interim Senate committee report.

In a move that would freeze billions of dollars in planned investment, the report recommended the suspension of all coal seam gas projects in the area of southern Queensland and northern NSW where the Murray-Darling Basin and the Great Artesian Basin overlap, pending new research into water pollution and the effects of "fracking".

The report noted the rise of what it called "broadly based opposition to the industry" and made 24 recommendations designed to introduce independent monitoring and testing of gas company claims, and give landholders more rights to reject company proposals.

If implemented, the recommendations would stop several big projects in their tracks, including Arrow Energy's \$1.5 billion initial investment in drilling across the Surat Basin. The coal seam gas industry peak body, the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association, said the report was out of date because its key recommendations were already addressed by gas companies.

The Senate committee said landholders should be given a list of chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, a process in which water, sand and chemicals are forced deep underground at high pressure to open pores in a coal seam and extract more gas from a well. Opponents of the industry's rapid expansion have said not enough is known about both the potential for contamination by the chemicals themselves, and the potential for fresh water aquifers to be spoiled by drilling.

"Public concern was exacerbated by the realization that possession of an exploration permit for coal seam gas entitled the holder of that permit to have access to land even without the consent of the landowner," the report said. "In fact, there are very few examples of a company seeking to enforce that legal right, but it nonetheless added to community anxiety about the industry."

The committee's chair, Senator Bill Heffernan, likened the

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industry's sudden growth to a gold rush mentality. "It appears to us that there should have been more thought and more work put into the long-term impacts on the environment ... given that the world's got to produce a lot more food with a lot less water and a lot less land in the future," he said.

The Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association's Rick Wilkinson said: "The report has been largely overtaken by events and a number of the issues raised are being addressed by industry and independent studies, government policy or regulation.

Source: AAP

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/senate-report-suggests-suspension-of-most-coal-seam-gas-drilling-20111130-1o762.html#ixzz1fDslA8Nx>

ABC Accused of Publishing Erroneous Material on a Coal-Seam Gas Website

THE gas and petroleum industry's peak body has lashed the ABC for publishing an information website on coal-seam gas mining "riddled with factual errors".

In a statement released this morning, the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association said it was seeking clarification on how the website could have been launched without proper checking of facts, calculations, or claims made.

"The ABC is held in very high esteem by the Australian public, but most observers would concede this piece of work fails to provide the objectivity, accuracy, or right of reply that is expected of quality journalism," Rick Wilkinson, APPEA's chief operating officer for eastern Australia said. He said APPEA would refer its concerns to the ABC's managing director, Mark Scott.

The website, which comprises several pages with colour illustrations, interactive maps and graphs, provides technical information on CSG mining and information on what Australians stand gain and lose buy supporting the gas rush.

The website includes pages on the gas rush, CSG and water, salt and toxic waste, the promise of CSG and how CSG is mined, with links to further information and ABC stories.

APPEA says its concerns include:

1. The website's central feature, a map of CSG wells,

which contains wells that are not even CSG wells (they are conventional gas wells).

2. The map incorrectly listing many abandoned and plugged wells as being in production or proposed CSG wells.

3. The website claiming CSG companies have received approval for 40,000 wells, which is not true.

4. The website claiming that "conservative estimates suggest coal seam gas wells could draw 300 gigalitres of water from the ground each year", which is neither a conservative estimate nor correct. Nor is it based on actual industry projections.

5. The website stating that desalination and water treatment cannot remove all contaminants, which is incorrect. Desalination technology used by the CSG industry is the same as that used to produce clean drinking water across Australia.

6. The website stating that CSG water is "very salty" when in fact the water in Australia's coal seams is on average only around one tenth as salty as seawater.

7. The website's use of wrong and misleading graphics, such as the one showing a drilling rig remaining on-site during a well's gas-production stage (graphic No 4) which is clearly wrong and simply does not happen.

"This misinformation from our national broadcaster is very concerning. It will take time to work through all problems associated with this site, but we will go through it carefully and methodically to ensure that the ABC corrects the record and that website viewers are not misled or misinformed about the expansion of a very important industry," Mr. Wilkinson said. He said APPEA would be scrutinizing the website for further information it regarded as erroneous.

The ABC's website includes information about its key sources sources. The broadcaster has yet to respond to APPEA'a criticisms. Source: The Australian

The Latest Issue of NICNAS Matters is Available for Download:

[http://www.nicnas.gov.au/Publications/NICNAS Matters/NICNAS Matters %20DEC11 PDF.pdf](http://www.nicnas.gov.au/Publications/NICNAS_Matters/NICNAS_Matters_%20DEC11_PDF.pdf)

It contains new legislation to the Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Act 1989 and the Schedule to the Act, commencing in September 2011.



More hazardous containers discovered
Photo: The Bulletin Panama

More Explosive Refrigerated Ocean Containers Found at Seattle Port

At least 10 more potentially explosive containers have been found at the Port of Seattle with a question mark still hanging over the fate of the growing collection of containers. Earlier this year, maritime authorities reported three reefer containers exploded or caused a fire, resulting in two fatalities in Vietnam, and one in Brazil. The explosions were believed to be the result of contaminated gas added to the boxes' refrigeration units during servicing in Vietnam. According to local reports, a growing stack of 80 refrigerated containers at the Port of Seattle has been sitting by itself, isolated from the rest of the port for safety reasons. The U.S. Coast Guard said it is working with the terminal operators to keep the 80 containers away from everyone, but admits there is no specific plan yet for dealing with them.

The Pacific Maritime Association, which represents the various terminal operators, said it is looking for a solution to checking each container. These at-risk containers are being turned away from terminal operators, and as a result, they remain out in the public. Meantime, the union is worried about containers that left Vietnam and may have passed through local ports before the security alert was put in place. The three reefers that exploded were operated by Maersk Line, but since the danger was reported, all carriers were scrambling to find any reefers that were repaired in Vietnam since February. Maersk has removed all of its 844 reefer containers that were repaired in Vietnam.

Source: <http://www.ifw-net.com>

Methyl Bromide-Toxic Fumigant In Cargo Containers – ComCare Alert

Background

Cargo containers may pose a risk of exposure to toxic fumigants including Methyl Bromide.

When an inspection is conducted on such a shipping container, vehicle operators and other persons may be exposed to Methyl Bromide if containers are opened and ventilated in their presence.



Image: <http://ohsonline.com>

What is Methyl Bromide?

Methyl Bromide is a colourless, odourless, flammable gas that is heavier than air. It is a gaseous pesticide used to completely fill a container to control pests (for example, insects, rodents or fungi). The effects of Methyl Bromide may include headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, tremor, slurred speech and irritation to eyes, respiratory system and skin. Exposure to it can be fatal if inhaled, swallowed or absorbed through skin.

Control Measures

To reduce the risk before containers are opened:

- 1. Determine whether the container has been fumigated from warning notices or clearance certificates. If in doubt, always treat the container as if it has been fumigated.**
 - 2. Place the container in a designated open area with good ventilation.**
 - 3. Set up barricades and warning signs to prevent unauthorized access.**
 - 4. Open the container door taking care to avoid exposure.**
 - 5. Before entering, ventilate the container using mechanical ventilation for at least 30 minutes, or, where mechanical ventilation is not practicable, allow natural ventilation for 12 hours in accordance with relevant Procedures. Ventilation times will be influenced by the nature of the load and how it has been packed (for example, absorbent quality of the load, restricted airflows etc).**
 - 6. Air testing should determine that the level of Methyl Bromide is below the exposure standard of 5ppm prior to entry. Where testing indicates levels above 5ppm continue ventilation.**
 - 7. Safety Data Sheets should be referred to in applying all appropriate control measures to minimize the risk of exposure to Methyl Bromide, including personal protective equipment.**
- Note that:**
- 8. Methyl Bromide is heavier than air and will settle in pockets within the load. As the load is shifted routinely, continue air testing to ensure the exposure standard is not exceeded. If the exposure standard is exceeded resume ventilation.**
 - 9. Choice of air testing equipment will be based on the flammable nature of the load.**

PDF version available: [Methyl Bromide-Toxic Fumigant In Cargo Containers \[PDF 147KB\]](#)



Underground Petroleum Storage Systems (UPSS) have the potential to leak, leading to expensive remediation and in some cases irreversible damage to the environment. Persistent leaks can have a major impact on neighbouring properties and impose very significant costs on the tank owner and the broader community.

**Image and caption:
hellotrade.com**

**2011 Conference
Papers**

Underground Petroleum Storage Systems – NSW Regulations

This UPSS Regulation was amended in November 2011 to extend the EPA's role as appropriate regulatory authority for the implementation of the Regulation for another five years to June 2017. It is anticipated that Councils will resume broader regulatory roles under the Regulation after this date. Underground petroleum storage systems (UPSS) have the potential to leak, leading to expensive clean-up bills and damage to the environment. Persistent leaks can have a major impact on neighbouring properties and impose very significant costs on the tank owner and the broader community. The Protection of the Environment Operations (Underground Petroleum Storage Systems) Regulation 2008 requires owners and operators to regularly check for leaks in the fuel tanks and pipes used to store and handle petroleum products. They also need to meet minimum standards in their day-to-day environmental management of these storage systems.

The Regulation was gazetted on 28 March 2008 and commenced on 1 June 2008 and aims to:

- **introduce preventative measures to reduce harm to the environment and human health**
- **save money and minimize time-consuming remediation by preventing leaks or dealing with them early**
- **ensure industry best practice is followed**
- **ensure appropriate validation and decommissioning of systems and sites.**

Under the Regulation, it is against the law to allow or ignore contamination resulting from a leaking or faulty UPSS.

The person responsible for a UPSS (usually the owner/operator) is required to have in place:

- **a system for detecting and monitoring leaks**
- **groundwater monitoring wells at sensitive locations and a program to test them**
- **an Environment Protection Plan for the facility**
- **systems in place for record keeping, reporting of leaks and notifying the local council when a UPSS is decommissioned.**

Source: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/clm/upss.htm>

The 2011 Conference Papers are now available on the Members' Only Pages of the AIDGC website:

<http://www.aidgc.org.au>



Industrial Chemicals - Australia and Canada Announce Cooperation

Australia's National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme (Nicnas) and Canada's Environmental and Health departments have signed an arrangement to enhance technical cooperation and share information on existing industrial chemicals.

The cooperation, which comes into effect in mid December, replaces an agreement between the two countries that only covered new chemicals.

Agreement:

http://www.nicnas.gov.au/International/HC_EC_NICNAS_Cooperative_Arrangement_2011_PDF.pdf

Rubbish Dump in Western Sydney to be Filled with Hazardous Material

The \$300 million waste management site at Eastern Creek comprises a recycling plant and a 150-metre-deep hole, which will be filled over the next 20 years with 12.5 million cubic metres of industrial waste, including asbestos.

Speaking at the opening of the facility on Thursday, Premier Barry O'Farrell said the dump posed no health risks to locals. "Contaminated waste has to be buried and that comes into the hole," O'Farrell said. "This operation has to be licensed by the environmental protection agency." "It has to meet licence conditions, and those conditions deal with issues like odour, like dust."

The site's owner, Dial-A-Dump CEO Ian Malouf, told reporters that asbestos would be buried at the location but was no danger to residents. "We are 15 metres underground, we are 70 metres or more below the water table itself, we don't handle putrescible waste, we're lining the bottom of the cell, we've done bore after bore after bore to prove all of that," Malouf said. "There is no risk here to the environment at all ... this is world's best practice."

Malouf said the site's entire road system was irrigated with a sprinkler system to minimize dust. About two million tonnes of dry waste will be processed at the huge recycling plant, while the remaining eight per cent will be tipped into the giant hole and then buried.

Operations at the facility are due to begin in January.

Source: AAP NewsWire



Image: econews.com.au

The Victorian Country Fire Authority has Allegedly Failed to Tell Past Workers They Had Been Exposed to Cancer-Causing Chemicals at a Training Base

Brian Potter, 68, has suffered ill-health and cancer for 15 years. He says many of his former colleagues have also had diverse cancers. He initially drew no link between the illnesses and their work at a CFA training base in Fiskville, western Victoria, where firefighters used to burn a range of waste oils, potentially containing chemicals such as benzene, toluene, xylene and phenol.

But after September 11, firefighters in New York City began to be diagnosed with a range of similar cancers. When new Australian legislation this year listed the types of cancers he and his colleagues were battling as being a specific risk of firefighting, Potter suspected a link. He said he was disappointed after reports accused the CFA of knowing its workers had been exposed to potentially cancer-causing chemicals since 1990, but failing to tell its employees. "I, like everyone else who had anything to do with Fiskville, would very much like to have been aware in 1992 that these products had been found," Potter told reporters on Tuesday. "I think if we'd been able to take that list [of chemicals] along to our specialists at that time, who's to say how many more might have survived or how much earlier some of their illnesses might have been treated?"

The Herald Sun has published an extract of a 1990 CFA letter stating that in May 1988, soil and water tests at the Fiskville site had shown the main contaminant was in resins or solvents that may have included benzene, toluene, xylene and phenol.

Maurice Blackburn lawyer Victoria Keays said an investigation was under way into what chemicals were burnt at Fiskville and the associated risks.

She said it was unknown whether the CFA was liable, but it was concerning if the CFA knew of the risks in 1990 and didn't pass the information on.

Emergency Services Minister Peter Ryan said the claims needed to be taken seriously. "The CFA has advised the coalition government it was not aware of the allegations until contacted by the media and that it is now thoroughly investigating the matter," a spokesperson for Ryan said.



Images: <http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au>





CFA chief executive officer Mick Bourke told reporters he first learnt of concerns about the Fiskville facility on December 5. This is a very serious matter for the CFA. I've spoken to the board chairman this morning who's advised me to take whatever steps are necessary to get the investigation under way," he said.

Bourke hoped obtaining the historical records needed to reconstruct what had been known and when would be done within several months. "It's too early for us to say who or if anyone's been affected," he said. "Our process will work through that."

The CFA was now trying to determine at what point the risks of exposure would have ceased.

Bourke will report to the board on the investigation's progress within three weeks. He said the facility no longer burnt chemicals: all the CFA's sites statewide moved to a gas-based firing system in the mid- to late-1990s.

Source: AAP NewsWire

\$200 Million Settlement Following Mine Explosion – West Virginia USA

A record \$210 million in penalties over what the government called an "entirely preventable" tragedy caused by the pursuit of profits ahead of safety has been agreed to be paid by the new owners of the West Virginia coal mine where 29 men were killed in an explosion.

This is the largest fine ever reached by the US for a mining disaster. The new owners, Alpha Natural Resources who bought the Upper Big Branch mine in Montcoal, West Virginia from Massey Energy in 2011 will not be charged with any crimes as long as the company complies to the agreement. The incident occurred in April 2010.

However, according to U.S. Attorney Booth Goodwin "The agreement does not prevent individual employees from being prosecuted." "No individuals are off the hook," Goodwin said, adding that federal prosecutors are still investigating.

Hours after the settlement was announced, federal regulators released a final report detailing 369 safety violations at the mine, including 12 that it said contributed to the blast. Fines related to those violations account for \$10.8 million of the settlement, and the company is required to pay further fines for violations dating back several years. Source: HazardEx



In an exhaustive 1,000-page report, the Mine Safety and Health Administration reaffirmed its previous conclusion that Massey Energy Co. management failed to prevent a small methane-gas ignition from turning into a powerful coal-dust explosion that swept through the mine, killing most miners instantly.

Source: Wall Street Journal



Cold Caller Scams Selling Safety

WORKSAFE Victoria says business operators need to be wary of cold callers offering health and safety services. This warning comes after a formal warning was issued against a company selling safety products. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission issued the warning alleging the company made false or misleading representations concerning the need for workplace safety materials and/or harassment or coercion. The alleged conduct may have contravened the Trade Practices Act (1974) or the Australian Consumer Law, the ACCC warned. According to WorkSafe, it frequently gets calls from businesses regarding cold callers who make claims about the need for businesses to take advantage of a range of products and services including safety signs, publications and first aid courses. These cold callers may cite regulation changes or purport to be connected to WorkSafe, with legal retribution hinted at. WorkSafe Victoria says it has no commercial operations and it does not endorse commercial products, directly test equipment or conduct training.

Decision by SA Parliament on WHS Bill

On 29 November, the Upper House, led by the Opposition, adjourned debate on the laws until February 2012, following a narrow vote of eleven to ten. This means the government is prevented from implementing the laws by the 1 January 2012 deadline. 'South Australia has led the way on harmonization with the early introduction of our Bill in April. 'So it is extremely disappointing Queensland, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and the Commonwealth have all passed this legislation, while our share of the reward payments is held to ransom by an obstructionist Opposition.' 'This proposed legislation has been before the South Australian Parliament since April so there is absolutely no excuse for the Opposition's decision to delay further debate.'

The State Government will now have to negotiate with the Commonwealth and as part of these discussions, the South Australian Government will communicate our firm intention to continue progressing the Work Health and Safety Bill as a high priority in 2012,' IR Minister Russel Wortley said.

Source: SafeWork SA

USA EPA Releases Formerly Confidential Chemical Information

As part of Administrator Lisa P. Jackson's commitment to enhance the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's chemicals management program and increase transparency, the agency is making available to the public hundreds of studies on chemicals that had been treated as confidential business information (CBI). Newly available information can be found using EPA's Chemical Data Access Tool.

EPA is increasing the availability of critical health and safety studies on chemicals that children and families are exposed to every day. Over the next year, the EPA expects to review several thousand additional studies on industrial chemicals and make many of these more accessible to the public.

Since 2009, 577 formerly confidential chemical identities are no longer confidential and more than 1,000 health and safety studies are now accessible to the public that were previously unavailable or only available in limited circumstances.

In 2010 EPA issued new guidance outlining the agency's plans to deny confidentiality claims for chemical identities in health and safety studies under the federal Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) that are determined to not be entitled to CBI status. EPA has been reviewing CBI claims in new and existing TSCA filings containing health and safety studies. Consistent with the guidance, the agency will request that the submitter voluntarily relinquish the CBI claims and make the newly available studies available to the public. To date, more than 35 companies have agreed to review previously submitted filings containing health and safety studies and determine if any CBI claims may no longer be necessary. The newly available information can be found under a new .declassified tab. using the Chemical Data Access Tool, launched in December 2010 to assist the public in retrieving chemical health and safety information submitted to EPA under TSCA.

Source:

<http://www.epa.gov/oppt/existingchemicals/pubs/transparency.html>



Ghadir still plant was Inaugurated by President Ahmadinejad in May 2011

Factory Blast Kills 8 in Iran

At least eight people have been killed in an explosion at a steel factory in the southern Iranian city of Yazd, the city's governor says. The blast occurred at Qadir Steel Complex in Yazd province Yazd Governor Azizollah Seifi said. He added that the blast also left 12 people injured, Mehr News Agency reported.

The cause of the explosion is under investigation, according to Seifi. Yazd's governor also said that the factory belongs to the private sector.

The head of Yazd's Forensic Pathology Organization, Ali Soleiman-Zadeh, said five people were killed at the scene of the explosion and three others died in hospital. He added that ten of the wounded have 100 percent burns.

Source: AGB/AZ

Later: The blast in the city of Yazd was caused by discarded ammunition which arrived at the plant with a consignment of scrap metal, the official Irna news agency reported.

It happened late on Sunday at the privately owned plant, Irna said. Source: BBC News Middle East

A Study of Flammable Liquid Storage Tank Accidents

This paper reviews 242 accidents of storage tanks that occurred in industrial facilities over last 40 years. Fishbone Diagram is applied to analyze the causes that lead to accidents. Corrective actions are also provided to help operating engineers handling similar situations in the future. The results show that 74% of accidents occurred in petroleum refineries, oil terminals or storage. Fire and explosion account for 85% of the accidents. There were 80 accidents (33%) caused by lightning and 72 (30%) caused by human errors including poor operations and maintenance. Other causes were equipment failure, sabotage, crack and rupture, leak and line rupture, static electricity, open flames etc. Most of those accidents would have been avoided if good engineering have been practiced.

For this .pdf report goto:

<http://www.safteng.net/images/stories/PDF/a%20study%20of%20storage%20tank%20accidents.pdf>



And now for a bit of light relief



We're FREE! P-p-pitter-patter of happy feet as penguins rescued from oil spill are released back into the sea

Waddling as fast as their little legs can carry them, these excited penguins have good reason to be happy.

Their delighted flight towards the sea line on Mount Maunganui beach in Tauranga, New Zealand, follows almost two months in humane captivity.

Rena by the Numbers: Tauranga Grounding

Please note: some numbers are estimates and many of these numbers are subject to change

At the height of the response approximately 600–800 people were involved in the oil spill response team,** including members of the Incident Command Centre (ICC) and people in the field undertaking beach clean-up and wildlife response.

Numbers as at 14 November are.

- Around 50 staff managing the overall response from the ICC
- Over 50 New Zealand Defence Force personnel on standby to respond within 24hours for any further assistance required.
- Around 40 oil spill responders working in the field.
- 48 people working in the wildlife response team, including National Oiled Wildlife Response Team personnel, veterinarians, ornithologists and expert responders with experience in the capture and treatment of oiled birds and volunteers.
- Department of Conservation personnel responding to oiled wildlife calls through 0800 333 771.
- Technical advice and personnel has been provided from Australia, the UK, US, Netherlands and Singapore, with offers of assistance and equipment and under international agreements

Beach clean up

- 962 tonnes of waste collected
- A total of 7,950 volunteers are registered in the volunteer database

Salvage

- Over 1,000 tonnes of oil recovered through fuel recovery operations on board *Rena*.
- 320 tonnes removed from the starboard no. 5 tank.
- 1,712 tonnes of oil on board *Rena* when it grounded
- Around 350 tonnes of oil lost overboard off *Rena* on 11 October
- Estimated 5–10 tonnes of oil lost overnight on Saturday 22 October
- 25 crew on board *Rena* at time of grounding
- 40 member salvage team from the appointed salvage company Svitzer with local support teams and colleagues providing round-the-clock technical advice and analysis from Australia, Singapore and the Netherlands

Containers

- 1,368 containers on board *Rena* at time of grounding
- 547 containers stored above deck at the time of grounding
- 821 containers stored below deck at time of grounding
- 121 containers with perishable foodstuffs

- 32 containers with dangerous goods
- Estimated 86 containers (total) lost overboard – 25 of these have been recovered
- 206 containers removed since container recovery began on November 16
- 219 transponders fitted to containers

Wildlife

- 500 birds can be housed at the Wildlife treatment and rehabilitation facility established in Te Maunga
- 109 animals being cared for at the wildlife facility
- 107 clean little blue penguins
- 0 oiled little blue penguin
- 2 rare New Zealand dotterels pre-emptively caught and held in wildlife centre
- 120 rare New Zealand dotterels in Bay of Plenty area
- 1,700 rare New Zealand dotterels in existence
- 2,049 dead birds collected

Equipment

- 1 Squirrel Helicopter for winching people on and off *Rena*
- 1 C172 aircraft used for aerial observation flight
- 1 MNZ-owned oil recovery vessels, *Kuaka* from Auckland
- 1 anchor-handling tug, *Go Canopus*, on site for container recovery, receiving oil and capable of maintaining station in poor weather
- 1 landing craft vessel *Brandy Wine*
- 1 barge *Sea Tow 60*
- 1 crane barge *Smit Borneo*, used for removing containers from *Rena*
- 600 metres of ocean-going booms from across New Zealand
- Salvage equipment brought by Svitzer includes air compressors, power generators, chains, shackles, ropes, tools and oil removal equipment

Equipment used during the reponse that has subsequently been stood down:

- 1 double-hulled tanker *Awanuia*, capable of receiving oil from *Rena*
- 1 MNZ-owned oil recovery vessels *Tukuperu* from Picton
- 2 Port of Auckland tugs *Maui* and *Waka Kume* and Auckland barge *Paponui*
- 1 tug *Swiber Torunn*
- 1 crane ship *Pancaldo*
- 1 Bell 214 Helicopter flying equipment to *Rena*, carrying 3 tonnes at a time
- 3 local tugs mobilized to intercept drifting containers and debris
- 3 mussel barges, *Ocean Phoenix*, *Northern Quest* and *Union Beach*, used for on-water oil recovery operations
- 4 NZDF Navy inshore patrol vessels, *Rotoiti*, *Hawea*,



Taupo, and Pukaki

- **1 NZDF Navy fuel tanker *Endeavour***
- **NZDF light operational vehicles**
- **NZDF Seasprite helicopter**
- **5 NZDF Unimogs**
- **NZDF literal warfare support group personnel and assets, conducting surveys of shipping lanes**

At the height of the response there were

- **between 200–300 personnel managing the response from the incident command centre. These included people from MNZ, the National Response Team, regional and local councils, Massey University, the Department of Conservation, the University of Waikato, WWF and New Zealand Fire Service. This figure also includes trained oil spill responders leading volunteers and other personnel in the field.**
- **around 150 NZDF personnel, from the Air Force, Navy and Army, with another 150 on short notice to respond as needed**
- **around 150 Department of Conservation personnel providing field support to the wildlife response, conducting field surveys, collecting live and dead oiled wildlife, and providing logistical support, with others available at short notice**
- **around 100 people working in the wildlife response team, including National Oiled Wildlife Response Team personnel, veterinarians, ornithologists and expert responders with experience in the capture and treatment of oiled birds.**

****Includes staff from MNZ, the National Response Team, regional and local councils, Massey University, the Department of Conservation, Forest and Bird, University of Waikato, WWF and New Zealand Fire Service.**

Source: <http://www.maritimenz.govt.nz/Rena/>



Santa Claus: An Engineers Perspective

A fun perspective on the ability of Santa Claus to deliver his presents to the Children of the World. Taken from

<http://www.maintenanceforums.com/> and written by Howard W Penrose, Ph.D., CMRP. Please note this was originally written in 2006 and uses American terms so please take the content in the spirit in which it was written, rather than for current accuracy.

1. There are approximately two billion children (persons under 18) in the world. However, since Santa does not visit children of some religions, this reduces the workload for Christmas night to 15% of the total, or 378 million. At an average (census) rate of 3.5 children per household,

that comes to 108 million homes, presuming there is at least one good child in each.

2. Santa has about 31 hours of Christmas to work with, thanks to the different time zones and the rotation of the earth, assuming he travels east to west (which seems logical). This works out to be 967.7 visits per second. This is to say that for each Christian household with a good child, Santa has around 1/1000th of a second to park the sleigh, hop out, jump down the chimney, fill the stockings, distribute the remaining presents under the tree, eat whatever snacks have been left for him, get back up the chimney, jump into the sleigh and get on to the next house.

Assuming that each of these 108 million stops is evenly distributed around the earth (which, of course, we know to be false, but will accept for the purposes of our calculations), we are now talking about 0.78 miles per household; a total trip of 75.5 million miles, not counting bathroom stops or breaks. This means Santa's sleigh is moving at 650 miles per second - 3,000 times the speed of sound. For purposes of comparison, the fastest man-made vehicle, the Ulysses space probe, moves at a poky 27.4 miles per second, and a conventional reindeer can run (at best) 15 miles per hour.

3. The payload of the sleigh adds another interesting element. Assuming that each child gets nothing more than a medium sized Lego set (two pounds), the sleigh is carrying over 500 thousand tons, not counting Santa himself. On land, a conventional reindeer can pull no more than 300 pounds. Even granting that the "flying" reindeer could pull ten times the normal amount, the job can't be done with eight or even nine of them - Santa would need 360,000 of them. This increases the payload, not counting the weight of the sleigh, another 54,000 tons, or roughly seven times the weight of the Queen Elizabeth (the ship, not the monarch)

4. 600,000 tons travelling at 650 miles per second creates enormous air resistance - this would heat up the reindeer in the same fashion as a spacecraft re-entering the earth's atmosphere. The lead pair of reindeer would absorb 14.3 quintillion joules of energy per second each. In short, they would burst into flames almost instantaneously, exposing the reindeer behind them and creating deafening sonic booms in their wake.

The entire reindeer team would be vaporized within 4.26 thousandths of a second, or right about the time Santa reached the fifth house on his trip.

Not that it matters, however, since Santa, as a result of accelerating from a dead stop to 650 m.p.s in .001 seconds, would be subjected to centrifugal forces of 17,500 g's. A 250 pound Santa (which seems ludicrously slim) would be pinned to the back of the sleigh by 4,315,015 pounds of force, instantly crushing his bones and organs and reducing him to a quivery blob of pink goo. Therefore, if Santa did exist, he's dead now.



**Wishing all AIDGC Members
a merry Christmas and
a happy New Year**