

ExxonMobil Baton Rouge Refinery Fire Response – February 2020

On Tuesday, Feb. 11, ExxonMobil volunteer fire team members responded to a fire in the Baton Rouge Refinery. The fire was contained within the immediate area and fully extinguished at approximately 5:45 a.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 12. There were no injuries.

Here are answers to questions you may have about the incident.

When did the incident begin and what were ExxonMobil's initial response steps?

The incident began at approximately 11:16 p.m. with a release and subsequent combustion of hydrocarbons from some elevated piping in the Baton Rouge Refinery. The ExxonMobil fire team was called at approximately 11:18 p.m., and the first ExxonMobil fixed high volume water spray was applied to the fire at approximately 11:23 p.m. ExxonMobil emergency responders began conducting air quality monitoring of the incident hot zone at approximately 11:30 p.m. The hot zone sets a safe perimeter allowing the ExxonMobil volunteer fire team to get as close to the fire as safely as possible.

When did ExxonMobil make initial notifications about the incident?

In addition to community notifications, ExxonMobil contacted the Baton Rouge Fire Department Public Information Officer (PIO) at approximately 11:42 p.m. Our notification to the BRFD PIO took place within approximately five minutes of 911 receiving their first dispatch call. Shortly thereafter, BRFD contacted ExxonMobil, and we requested air quality monitoring by the BRFD HAZMAT team. ExxonMobil would not typically call 911 for a fire inside of our facility. We dispatch our emergency response teams and voluntarily call BRFD directly as needed.

As soon as factual information became available from onsite incident command and emergency response partners, ExxonMobil began outreach to media and stakeholders via phone calls, emails, texts, social media, live media interviews, and also used the courtesy automated dialer notification system. ExxonMobil voluntarily notifies the community during incidents, planned flaring or any other activity neighbors may notice. We use the CodeRed automated dialer system which allows individuals the ability to register for alerts to a specified phone number. This courtesy automated dialer notification system sent a notice to approximately 1,900 phone numbers.

What did air monitoring show?

To ensure a safe work area for responders, ExxonMobil initiated air quality monitoring in the "hot zone" of the incident at approximately 11:30 p.m. The hot zone sets a safe perimeter allowing the ExxonMobil volunteer fire team to get as close to the fire as safely as possible. During the incident, ExxonMobil took 126 real-time air quality monitoring readings at the fence-line. ExxonMobil's fenceline monitoring was approximately 2,000 – 5,000 ft. away from the fire. The lower detection limit (LDL) for ExxonMobil's air quality monitoring equipment can range from 0.01 parts per million (ppm) to 1 ppm dependent on the model.

Air quality monitoring was also conducted by BRFD HAZMAT and LDEQ, and all readings were below the state's ambient air standard for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), benzene, butadiene, SO₂, H₂S, and CO. These readings indicate that air quality was protective of human health as set by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) established for worker safety. This

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information also demonstrates that although the reportable quantities of some materials were exceeded at the situs of the fire, the majority of the released material was combusted and therefore not detected off-site. The wind direction was blowing from the east to the west at approximately 8 mph.

Did the city or agencies notify the public?

Since air quality monitoring did not detect any impact outside of the facility, assessments by HAZMAT, LDEQ and the Louisiana State Police indicated that neighbors did not need to take any action. Therefore, no alert was issued by the city or emergency response agencies.

Who responded to the incident?

ExxonMobil maintains a fully-trained, qualified onsite emergency organization 24/7. Approximately 75 trained ExxonMobil volunteer fire team members extinguished the fire. These award-winning volunteer fire squads receive training at the Louisiana State University, BEST, Mississippi Fire Academy, and Texas A&M fire training schools. While we manage our business with the goal of preventing incidents, we are prepared for emergencies and respond quickly, effectively and with care for the health and safety of our workforce and community.

The BRFD PIO was on site assisting with media interviews and relaying real-time updates to 911 dispatch. The BRFD HAZMAT team was on site conducting air quality monitoring alongside LDEQ and ExxonMobil.

What emissions were reported?

When a release like this happens, we are required to call designated governmental agencies within a one-hour window if it is believed that we exceeded a “reportable quantity” on a particular chemical. These reportable quantities are determined by state and federal regulators to determine air quality impacts. During the incident, the Baton Rouge Refinery reported potential reportable quantity exceedances of several substances (flammable vapors, 1,3-butadiene, SO₂, benzene, H₂S, sulfuric acid, and oil to soil, which are used to make gasoline and other products). The initial one-hour notification to the Louisiana State Police was a conservatively high estimate meant to be most protective of the general public before actual quantities were calculated. The purpose of the Seven Day Letter is to provide updated information since more data is available.

What impact did the fire have on the material released?

The majority of the released material was combusted. Release estimates included in the seven day letter account for an approximate 98 percent effective destruction efficiency. The destruction efficiency is based on ExxonMobil Research & Engineering technical models and assessment. Air monitoring in the area indicating “non-detect” levels supports the destruction efficiency calculations. Industrial emergency response procedures guide us to not extinguish a burning hydrocarbon fire until the source of the release is isolated so that we minimize any release of non-combusted hydrocarbons.