

Chemical Cloud Release Sparks Federal Probe



Aerial drone photo of the chemical cloud over Atchison, KS on October 21, courtesy of Corie Dunn.

(KAIR)--The search for answers, following the release of a chemical cloud that forced Atchison evacuations Friday, is continuing.

Among the agencies represented in the investigation at Atchison's MGP Ingredients is the U.S. Chemical Safety Board.

The independent federal agency, in a news release Monday, states that a four person investigative team is being utilized in the probe. It's being led by Supervisory Investigator Johnnie Banks.

Chemical Safety Board Chairperson Vanessa Allen Sutherland, in the release, calls the incident one that “underscores the very serious consequences that can occur when a chemical release goes beyond a facility's fence line and impacts nearby residents.”

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is also investigating.

That's confirmed in an email response to questions posed by MSC Radio News.

According to Scott Allen, Regional Director for Public Affairs for the U.S. Department of Labor, which includes OSHA, the Wichita office is continuing to investigate.

The agency's probe includes both MGP and Kansas City, Kansas based Harcros Chemicals Inc.

Allen says OSHA has [inspection history](#) with both.

The chemical cloud occurred Friday morning when two chemicals were accidentally mixed at MGP, located on Atchison's Main Street.

According to Atchison City Manager Trey Cocking, 102 persons sought hospitalized care following the release of the chemical cloud, with the majority treated and released.

Allen says that among them was one employee of Harcros and three employees of MGP.

One of the MGP employees was hospitalized for observation, but released Monday.

MGP Ingredients, in a statement released Saturday, said the company will “work closely with the appropriate regulatory agencies to fully understand the cause and mitigate the chance of a similar incident occurring in the future.”

The company is shut down this week for a planned, week long, turnaround.

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