



BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT

Compliance and Enforcement Division

INCIDENT REPORT

Tesoro Refinery (Site #B2758)
Martinez, CA
September 16, 2004

On September 16, 2004 at approximately 12:30 am the Tesoro Refinery located in Avon, east of Martinez, had a fire start in a spent acid tank in the acid plant portion of the refinery complex. The fire resulted in visible flames above the rim of the tank and a thick black plume moving in an easterly direction. Tesoro issued a Level 2 community alert notice that indicates there was a potential for offsite impacts to the community. No shelter in place was called. Wind conditions during the fire were light winds from the West and Northwest allowing the smoke plume to rise vertically before being carried in an easterly direction.

Tesoro responded with their own fire department which was later augmented with Concord Fire Department. Due to the material in the tank, water could not be used to suppress the fire and carbon dioxide was used. The black plume had diminished significantly by 07:00 am. The County reported the "All Clear", incident over, at approximately 8:20 am. Tesoro reported the acid plant associated with the tank was shutdown and there were no injuries as a result of the fire.

District staff and Contra Costa County Hazardous Materials staff responded with mobile monitoring equipment and took several ambient air canisters in downwind areas. Ground level monitors and mobile sampling indicated no elevated levels of Hydrogen Sulfide or Sulfur Dioxide, two air pollutants commonly associated with petroleum refining. Ambient sampling results show background concentrations of hydrocarbons. ([click here for a copy of sampling results](#))

The cause of the fire is still unknown at this time. The District is continuing to investigate the incident.

UPDATE:

Following the investigation, no notices of violation were issued as the incident was determined to be caused by an accidental fire.