



BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT

Compliance and Enforcement Division

INCIDENT REPORT **Chevron Refinery (A0010)** **Richmond, CA** **September 6, 2016**

On September 3 at approximately [7:09 am](#), The Chevron Refinery in Richmond lost their hydro-cracking unit (TKN Unit) in the Isomax area of the refinery. Chevron notified the Contra Costa County Community Warning System of a Level 1 incident shortly after the incident began. Staff contacted the Chevron Refinery and was informed that the TKN unit experienced sudden equipment failure and the unit's process gasses were sent to flares. Heavy flaring occurred for approximately 15-20 minutes and then receded to intermittent flaring as depressurization continues at the process unit. The District began receiving community complaints of smoke about [8:55 am](#). Staff responded to investigate the complaints and document any emission violations at [9:15 am](#). The smoke plume from the flares was generally heading northeast towards the West Contra Costa Landfill, away from populated areas. The flaring event ceased at 10:36 am.

Flares are used by refineries as safety devices to abate emissions that would otherwise be vented directly to the atmosphere. Flare systems are designed to provide for the safe disposal of hydrocarbons that are either automatically vented or manually drawn from process units at refineries. Hydrocarbons must be controlled in a safe and effective manner in the event of an operational upset. Flare systems gather vented gases and combust them to prevent release directly into the atmosphere.

The District will continue to investigate this incident to determine if there were any violations of air quality regulations. This report will be updated as new information becomes available.