



Compliance and Enforcement Division

INCIDENT REPORT

**Chevron Richmond Refinery (Site #A0010)
Richmond, CA
January 15, 2007**

On January 15, 2007 at approximately 5:18 am, the Chevron Refinery in Richmond had a fire in the Crude Unit area of the facility. The Chevron Richmond Refinery is the largest refinery in the San Francisco Bay Area and has the capacity to process 240,000 barrels of crude oil per day. The Crude Unit is the main distillation plant in the refinery that processes the crude oil into other products.

The Crude Unit was not in production and was undergoing maintenance at the time of the fire. The material burned was diesel type oil used to clean the crude unit for maintenance. The fire was caused by a pump seal failure during the maintenance activities. Chevron refinery fire department and Richmond Fire Department responded.

The smoke plume from the fire was observed rising over the refinery in a Westerly direction over Point Richmond and over the bay. Contra Costa County Hazardous Materials unit and Air District also responded to the incident. District staff handled three air pollution complaints.

A Level 3 (Offsite impacts expected) shelter in place was issued at 5:33 am on the Contra Costa County Community Warning System and the community sirens in the Point Richmond area were activated. The employees at the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge toll plaza were evacuated. One refinery employee was injured during the fire and was taken to a local hospital for treatment.

The ground level monitors located around the refinery did not record any excesses of hydrogen sulfide or sulfur dioxide. The winds were about 4 – 8 mph from the North East – East direction. Contra Costa Health Services took three downwind air samples during this incident that were analyzed at the District Laboratory (click here for a [copy of map](#) and [sampling results](#).)

At 8:40 am, an All Clear notice was made by the Contra Costa Health Services for the shelter-in-place. A small fire continued to burn but sufficient fire suppression contained any impacts from the plume to within the refinery property. Chevron reported that the fire was extinguished at 4:23 pm.

District Staff will continue to investigate this incident to determine if the facility violated any District Regulations.

UPDATE:

The final investigation report indicates that the fire occurred from a release of a mixture of wash oil and partially processed crude oil. This release was due to a failure of a section of the swing out wash oil pipe where the wall of the pipe was thinned by corrosion.

The District has issued a Notice of Violation (#A47768) to Chevron Corp for the violation of Regulation 1, Section 301: public nuisance.