



NEWS RELEASE

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Illinois EPA Refers Phillips 66 Company to Attorney General for Enforcement

Action taken following sulfuric acid release in Hartford and Wood River

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency has referred an enforcement action to the Illinois Attorney General’s office against Phillips 66 Company, located at 900 South Central Avenue in Roxana (Madison County). The referral cites violations of the Illinois Environmental Protection Act and Illinois Pollution Control Board Regulations related to the release of sulfuric acid to the atmosphere.

Between May 28 and May 30, 2021, four railroad tank cars were loaded with spent sulfuric acid originating at the Phillips 66 facility. On June 2, 2021, the tank cars were loaded onto a train on Norfolk Southern Railway and Kansas City Southern Railway rail lines. At approximately 3:00 p.m., a pressure relief disk on one of the tank cars ruptured and sulfuric acid began venting to the atmosphere. At that time, the train was sitting on the railroad tracks located north of Rand Avenue and east of State Route 3 near Hartford and Wood River. A Kansas City Southern Railway employee was injured during the rupture and was taken to the hospital for treatment and released. During the evening of June 2, two other railcars also began venting sulfuric acid. A fourth rail car began venting the morning of June 3.

On June 3, 2021, at approximately 4:30 a.m., the Wood River fire department issued a shelter in place order for the area in Wood River and Roxana. Fire departments from Wood River, East Alton, Godfrey, Roxana, Rosewood Heights, Alton and Edwardsville responded to the incident, as well as Madison County HAZMAT Team and the Madison County Emergency Management Agency. Representatives from Illinois EPA and U.S. EPA were also on site. The fire departments have deployed water curtains to control the plume of sulfuric acid; however, active venting continues.

In the referral, the Illinois EPA cited violations of the Illinois Environmental Protection Act and Illinois Pollution Control Board regulations by Phillips 66 Company for causing or allowing the release of sulfuric acid into the atmosphere. The referral asks the Attorney General to pursue legal action and require Phillips 66 to immediately stop the release and conduct a root cause analysis of the cause of the rupture. In addition, the company should submit documentation to the Illinois EPA including the cause analysis report, all air monitoring data, calculations of the amount of sulfuric acid and SO₂ released, and a work plan to address the removal and disposal of any remaining material in the railcars.

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