

# Arkema confirms explosions, smoke at Texas plant

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Arkema confirmed at 10:30 BST on Thursday that explosions and smoke have been reported at its plant in Crosby, Texas, following flooding caused by Hurricane Harvey.

The plant produces liquid organic peroxides which, if not refrigerated, can decompose and catch fire. The company and local authorities had warned of this and the area had been evacuated.

"Organic peroxides are extremely flammable and, as agreed with public officials, the best course of action is to let the fire burn itself out," said the company's statement on Thursday.

"We want local residents to be aware that product is stored in multiple locations on the site, and a threat of additional explosion remains. Please do not return to the area within the evacuation zone until local emergency response authorities announce it is safe to do so."

The leak of hazardous chemicals into the atmosphere was also confirmed by local authorities at 10:00 BST (4:00 Houston time). The Harris County Sheriff's Office [HCSO], where Crosby is located, [said](#) that one of its deputies had been taken to hospital after inhaling fumes from the plant, and that nine others had driven themselves to hospital as a precaution.

Earlier in the day, a spokesperson at Arkema told ICIS how the explosion had become inevitable after the refrigeration systems at the plant had failed to function following flooding.

Arkema confirmed that flooding caused by Hurricane Harvey at its liquid organic peroxides plant in Crosby, Texas, was impeding the cooling of the chemicals and an explosion at the facility was unavoidable.

In an update on 30 August, the company had [said](#) alternative diesel-powered refrigerators were being used, although already at the time spoke of a "real" risk of explosion as all electricity has been cut off.

"Unfortunately, yes [the plant will catch fire]. The cooling system is not working anymore, so the temperature is rising up and these products will decompose and will catch fire," said the Arkema spokesperson in an update to ICIS on Thursday at 9:30 BST.

However, it added the time to the explosion was difficult to predict.

While the company continues to monitor the rising temperatures, the spokesperson said the monitoring system's batteries would also switch off when they run out of power.

"When the batteries die, we will not have any information related to the rising temperature. It is difficult to predict when the fire will start."

The spokesperson said the company has not yet evaluated the financial impact from the upcoming accident nor the time it will take to rebuild the facility.

"It will depend on the damages but it's too early to have this question in mind. First, [we need to establish] what happened, what will happen and what impact will have," it concluded.

As a precautionary measure, local authorities had already ordered late on 29 August the evacuation of all residents within a 1.5 miles (2.4 kilometres) radius from the plant. Crosby is a small town east of Houston.

According to the [company's website](#), the Crosby facility employs 57. Its exact location is 18000 Crosby Eastgate Road, Crosby, Texas.

Among other organic peroxides, Arkema produces at its Crosby plant plastic resins, polystyrene (PS), polyethylene (PE), polypropylene (PP), polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and polyester reinforced fibreglass, as well as acrylic resin.

Several chemical plants in Texas have [been affected](#) by Harvey, with many shut since 25 August. The tropical storm is now heading to neighbouring US state of Louisiana.

*Sourc Icis News*