

Prefect of Seine-Maritime

Regional Communication Department Headed by the Minister Representative

Rouen, February 12, 2013, 5:30 p.m.

Media Statement

PRESS KIT: CODERST-LUBRIZOL

(Departmental Committee for Health and Technological Risks)

LUBRIZOL France is a subsidiary of the LUBRIZOL CORPORATION, and manufactures additives for lubricants. On January 21, 2013, the Rouen plant experienced a malfunction in one unit. This incident released emissions of mercaptan, a gas with a very strong, unpleasant odor. Moreover, the local incident became national when the mercaptan odor first noticed in Seine-Maritime later spread from the English Channel to the Paris region.

Permanent measures undertaken by the company and then by the INERIS¹ at the request of the DREAL² enabled us to establish that the emissions remained below the threshold for the product's toxicity. Nevertheless, the emission of the mercaptan generated an unpleasant event at the time. It should be noted that the human nose can detect mercaptan at very low levels.

During this event, the State mobilized alongside the company to guarantee as much as possible the industrial actions undertaken and to ensure the safety of our citizens in and around the industrial site.

As a precaution, a special emergency plan (PPI) was implemented so that the company's new actions would be supervised by the State through the action of the DREAL, the INERIS would attest to the reality of the measures taken around the site, the ARS³ would verify the thresholds of noxiousness and ensure the reliable monitoring of the safety plan, and all the emergency services, SDIS⁴, DDSP⁵, SAMU⁶, along with the Prefecture would be prepared to act at any moment in the event of an additional incident.

The elected officials from Rouen, Petit Quevilly and the CREA⁷ were closely involved with monitoring the crisis and ensured the relaying of information to the population.

The event concluded on February 6, 2013. After the neutralization, removal and destruction of the foul smelling substance during the first week, the second week was dedicated to cleaning the tank and the final days to cleaning the bottom of the tank. The process to neutralize, remove and clean the substances in question took place under the supervision of the DREAL.

¹ French National Institute for Industrial Environment and Risks

² French Regional Department of the Environment, Planning and Housing

³ Action request system

⁴ Departmental Fire and Rescue Service

⁵ Departmental Directorate of Public Security

⁶ Urgent Medical Aid Service

⁷ Community of Greater Rouen -Elbeuf-Austreberthe

Pierre-Henry MACCIONI, Prefect of the Haute-Normandie and Seine-Maritime regions, wished to very quickly convene this special CODERST, which he did.

This authority brings together territorial government organizations, representatives of approved consumer, fishing and environmental protection associations, members having their business activities in the commission's area of expertise and experts in these same fields, qualified persons and State services. It allows for an exchange of information to identify margins of improvement of our partners' and our actions.

The LUBRIZOL Company was progressively authorized to restart its activities, except for the unit in which the tank that caused this event was located. It was asked to present a full report on the causes of the incident, the mechanisms that led to this release of unpleasant odors, the data gathered during the incident, and the corrective measures intended to prevent any repeat of such an incident. The first report was given to DREAL on February 7. The Prefect will not lift the suspension of activity for the unit that malfunctioned until after the issuance of a full report, the analysis of said report by the DREAL and the validation of the corrective measures.

The Public Prosecutor, present at this CODERST, used the facts to open an investigation, entrusted to the research section of the Gendarmerie.

The meeting of this special CODERST is a step to gather information concerning the incident. It will be followed by the meeting of the Local Committees for Information and public Consultation (CLIC) as well as an analysis of the communication to improve the public information service.

What is to be learned from the CODERST?

- Corrections will be made to the industrial process in order to avoid a future incident of this type.
- The monitoring of emissions will be reinforced at the site, specifically by the company's installation of a network of reliable sensors.
- A multi-channel system to disperse information to the population will be developed in cooperation with the elected officials of the greater Rouen community and the associations.
- No health follow-up was decided upon, due to the absence of any impact on health.

A press kit has been issued to help you better understand:

- The incident and the technical measures taken. (The DREAL report)
- The incident's impact on health. (The Regional Health Agency's report)
- The warning of the population. (The Prefect's report, with the support of the General Department of Civil Safety)

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