

Refinery Events

June 22, 2012—June 28, 2012

The following events were obtained from the Department of Energy (DOE) website:

BP Reports Normal Operations after Extinguishing a Fire at Its 413,000 b/d Whiting, Indiana Refinery June 21

BP Plc reported it extinguished a fire about an hour after it started at its Whiting refinery Thursday morning. A spokesman said the plant was operating normally following the incident.

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/06/21/energy-markets-products-idINL1E8HLIPO20120621>

Posted to DOE website 6-22-12.

Shell Reports Crude Oil Piping Leak at Its 329,800 b/d Deer Park, Texas Refinery June 20

Shell reported a leak was discovered on crude oil piping near tanks A-327 and A-328 at its Deer Park refinery Wednesday afternoon, according to a filing with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Approximately 285 barrels of crude oil were spilled, the filing said. Operators isolated the leak and were planning repairs at the time of the filing.

<http://www11.tceq.state.tx.us/oc/eer/index.cfm?fuseaction=main.getDetails&target=170063>

Posted to DOE website 6-22-12.

Equipment Malfunction Shuts HCU, Leads to Flaring at Motiva's 600,000 b/d Port Arthur, Texas Refinery June 23

Motiva Enterprises reported its new 75,000 b/d hydrocracking unit (HCU) No. 2 was shut Saturday morning after a level trip in the high pressure hydrogen sulfide absorber led to a trip on the recycle gas compressor, resulting in excess pressure in the unit and flaring from the HCU-2 flare, according to a filing with state regulators. Operators were working to depressurize and stabilize the unit at the time of the filing.

Reuters, 17:49 June 24, 2012

<http://www11.tceq.state.tx.us/oc/eer/index.cfm?fuseaction=main.getDetails&target=170170>

Posted to DOE website 6-25-12.

Settling Converter Trips, Leads to Flaring at ExxonMobil's 344,500 b/d Beaumont, Texas Refinery June 22

ExxonMobil Corp. reported that nitric oxide was releasing from a high-pressure flare due to a trip in the settling converter at its Beaumont refinery Friday night, according to a filing with the U.S. National Response Center. Operators were working to restart the converter at the time of the filing.

http://www.nrc.uscg.mil/reports/rwservlet?standard_web+inc_seq=1015511 Posted to DOE website 6-25-12.

Equipment Failure Leads to Emissions at Valero's 142,000 b/d Corpus Christi, Texas Refinery June 23

Valero reported 10 pounds of benzene and 100 pounds of unspecified volatile organic compounds released due to equipment failure at its Corpus Christi refinery overnight on Saturday, according to a filing with the U.S. National Response Center. Operators were working to repair the equipment at the time of the filing.

http://www.nrc.uscg.mil/reports/rwservlet?standard_web+inc_seq=1015441 Posted to DOE website 6-25-12.

Update: Delta Closes on Trainer, Pennsylvania Refinery Deal June 22; Set to Begin Maintenance Overhaul in Early July, Resume Production in September

A Delta Air Lines subsidiary, Monroe Energy LLC, on Friday closed on a deal to purchase Phillips 66's idled 185,000 b/d Trainer refinery. The company announced in early May an agreement with Phillips 66 to acquire the refinery near Philadelphia by the end of June; the facility has been idle since September 2011. Workers are expected

to return to the plant next week and will begin turnaround activities after the July 4 holiday. Monroe Energy, which will operate the plant, plans to resume fuel production in September.
<http://travel.usatoday.com/flights/story/2012-06-26/Delta-closes-on-deal-for-Pennsylvania-oil-refinery/55833832/1>
Posted to DOE website 6-26-12.

Sunoco Shuts Crude Unit Vacuum Tower at Its 335,000 b/d Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Refinery June 20 – Filing with City Regulators

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-06-25/n-y-gasoline-strengthens-after-sunoco-refinery-shuts-equipment.html>
Posted to DOE website 6-26-12.

Update: BP Returns SRU to Normal Operation at Its 413,000 b/d Whiting, Indiana Refinery by June 25 after Fire Last Week – Sources

BP Plc had returned a sulfur recovery unit (SRU) to normal operation at its Whiting refinery by Monday, according to sources familiar with refinery operations. The SRU was operating at reduced rates following a fire at the refinery last Thursday, the sources said. The fire lasted about an hour and caused no permanent damage.
Reuters, 16:51 June 25, 2012. Posted to DOE website 6-26-12.

Update: Motiva Restores Operation of New HCU at Its 600,000 b/d Port Arthur, Texas Refinery June 25 after Malfunction June 23 – Sources

Motiva Enterprises was restoring operation of the new 75,000 b/d hydrocracking unit (HCU) at its Port Arthur refinery on Monday following a malfunction on Saturday, according to sources familiar with operations. The refinery had reported to state regulators a level trip in the high pressure hydrogen sulfide absorber Saturday led to a trip on the recycle gas compressor, resulting in excess pressure in the unit and flaring from the HCU-2 flare.
Reuters, 12:47 June 25, 2012. Posted to DOE website 6-26-12.

Shell Says Temporary Upset May Cause Flaring at Its 329,800 b/d Deer Park, Texas Refinery June 25–26

Shell Oil Co. reported a temporary upset might cause flaring at its Deer Park refinery, according to a recorded message on the local Community Awareness and Emergency Response line.
Reuters, 23:28 June 25, 2012. Posted to DOE website 6-26-12.

Lyondell Reports Leak in Benzene-Toulene Splitter Unit Tower at Its 270,600 b/d Houston, Texas Refinery June 25

LyondellBassell subsidiary Houston Refining LP reported a leak was discovered on the top of the South Clay Tower of its No. 940 benzene-toulene splitter unit at its Houston refinery overnight Monday, according to a filing with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Operators blocked the line in and stopped the leak.
<http://www11.tceq.state.tx.us/oc/eer/index.cfm?fuseaction=main.getDetails&target=170269>
Posted to DOE website 6-26-12.

Cooling Tower Leak Causes Benzene Emissions at Flint Hills's 288,468 b/d Corpus Christi, Texas Refinery June 25

Flint Hills Resources reported a release of benzene into the atmosphere due to a leak in a cooling tower at its Corpus Christi refinery Monday afternoon, according to a filing with the U.S. National Response Center. Operators were working to find the source of the leak at the time of the filing, and it was unclear whether the release had been secured.
http://www.nrc.uscg.mil/reports/rwservlet?standard_web+inc_seq=1015674 Posted to DOE website 6-26-12.

SRU Malfunction Leads to Sour Water Stripper Shutdown, Triggers Flaring at Alon's 67,000 b/d Big Spring, Texas Refinery June 25

Alon USA Energy reported a malfunction in the sulfur recovery unit (SRU) No. 2 at its Big Spring refinery Monday morning led to the shutdown of a sour water stripper (SWS) and forced operators to reduce feed from units, according to a filing with state regulators. The snag was initially due to an air swing caused by plugging piping associated with the contactor bottoms pump, the filing said. Operators immediately moved as much feed as possible

to the No. 1 SRU, shut the SWS, and vented remaining feed to the North Flare. The snag triggered flaring from SRU-2, the No. 2 shell clause off-gas treating (SCOT) unit, and an incinerator at the refinery. The event was ongoing at the time of the filing.

Reuters, 14:16 June 25, 2012

<http://www11.tceq.state.tx.us/oc/eer/index.cfm?fuseaction=main.getDetails&target=170245>

Posted to DOE website 6-26-12.

Supply Line Leaks Benzene at ExxonMobil's 503,000 b/d Baton Rouge, Louisiana Refinery June 25

ExxonMobil reported an unknown amount of benzene released onto concrete and into the air due to a leak in a supply line on the T1 tower at its Baton Rouge refinery Monday morning, according to a filing with the U.S. National Response Center. Operators isolated the line to stop the leak and expected to secure the line within an hour at the time of the filing.

http://www.nrc.uscg.mil/reports/rwservlet?standard_web+inc_seq=1015627 Posted to DOE website 6-26-12.

Unspecified Unit Breakdown Causes Flaring, Minimal Impact to Production at ExxonMobil's 149,500 b/d Torrance, California Refinery June 25–26

ExxonMobil Corp. expects minimal impact from the breakdown of an unidentified unit at its Torrance refinery overnight last night, according to a company spokeswoman. The company on Tuesday reported unplanned flaring and an unspecified unit breakdown in a filing with the South Coast Air Quality Management District. In a separate filing with the California Emergency Management Agency, operators reported sulfur dioxide emissions due to the flaring at the refinery. ExxonMobil expects to meet its contractual commitments, the spokeswoman said.

Reuters, 08:52 June 26, 2012

Reuters, 11:36 June 26, 2012. Posted to DOE website 6-26-12.

Update: Flint Hills Shuts HCU for Repairs Due to Cooling Tower Leak at Its 288,468 b/d Corpus Christi, Texas Refinery June 25

Flint Hills Resources reported flaring at the West Plant of its Corpus Christi refinery was due to a leak from the hydrocracker heat exchanger into the continuous catalytic regenerator (CCR) cooling tower, according to a filing with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Operators were shutting the hydrocracking unit (HCU) to make repairs, the filing said. The refinery had previously reported a release of benzene due to a leak in a cooling tower Monday afternoon.

<http://www11.tceq.state.tx.us/oc/eer/index.cfm?fuseaction=main.getDetails&target=170327>

Posted to DOE website 6-27-12.

Update: Investigators Say Caustic Vapors May Have Caused Rapid Corrosion in Motiva's 325,000 CDU at Its 600,000 b/d Port Arthur, Texas Refinery – Sources

Investigators trying to determine the cause of accelerated corrosion in Motiva's newly commissioned 325,000 b/d crude distillation unit (CDU) believe caustic vapors in the unit could be responsible for the damage, according to sources familiar with the investigation. Operators shut the CDU for repairs after a fire on June 9. While the fire damage was negligible, operators have since discovered extensive corrosion in the CDU's vessels and piping. Investigators now believe that when the CDU was idled for repairs after the fire, a few gallons per day of caustic was inadvertently seeping into the unit. Several days later, when operators began heating up the unit in an attempt to resume operations, the undiluted caustic vaporized into a highly corrosive agent. It is unclear why the caustic continued flowing into the unit while it was idled for repairs. A Motiva spokeswoman said only that a preliminary inspection indicated that parts of the new unit have been contaminated with elevated levels of caustic. The extent of the damage is still not fully known as portions of the crude unit are too hot to enter, according to the sources. Some areas may not be accessible for weeks.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/25/usa-refinery-motiva-idUSL2E8HO4GH20120625> Posted to DOE website 6-27-12.

Update: ExxonMobil Says Supply Line Leak Did Not Impact Production at Its 503,000 b/d Baton Rouge, Louisiana Refinery

ExxonMobil Corp. said on Tuesday a minor leak detected on chemical plant equipment at its Baton Rouge refinery over the weekend did not impact production. Operators detected and quickly stopped the leak on June 23, according to a spokeswoman. The company had reported an unknown amount of benzene released due to a leak in a supply line on the T1 tower in a filing with the U.S. National Response Center Monday. "There was no impact to production, and we continue to meet all contractual commitments," the spokeswoman said. Reuters, 13:33 June 26, 2012. Posted to DOE website 6-27-12.

SRU Shuts Unexpectedly at Phillips 66's 139,000 b/d Wilmington, California Refinery June 26

Phillips 66 reported a sulfur recovery unit (SRU) shut down unexpectedly at its Wilmington refinery Tuesday morning, according to a filing with the California Emergency Management Agency. Reuters, 12:30 June 26, 2012. Posted to DOE website 6-27-12.

Federal Agency to Examine Data on Sulfur Dioxide Emissions from Sinclair's 80,000 b/d Sinclair, Wyoming Refinery

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ASTDR) said it will examine 3 years of data on sulfur dioxide emissions from Sinclair's refinery near Rawlins, Wyoming to help determine if it should conduct a more in-depth investigation on the effects those emissions could have on public health in the area.

http://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/federal-agency-eyes-emissions-from-sinclair-refinery-inwyoming/article_20a32eb6-20c6-5fc3-b5d8-1caba3371a5c.html Posted to DOE website 6-27-12.

Sunoco Reaches Tentative Labor Agreement with USW Members at Its 335,000 b/d Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Refinery

Sunoco Inc. on Tuesday reached a tentative labor agreement with members of the United Steelworkers (USW) union working at its Philadelphia refinery, according to sources familiar with the situation. USW members are scheduled to vote on the agreement Monday. Securing labor terms will move a joint venture Sunoco is discussing with Carlyle Group to keep the refinery operating one step closer to fruition, sources said. In mid-April Sunoco entered into exclusive discussions with Carlyle regarding a potential purchase of the refinery. Sunoco continues to operate the plant but has said it will begin idling the facility's main processing units in August if it cannot reach a deal to sell. <http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/06/27/sunoco-philadelphia-usw-idINL2E8HR1DT20120627> Posted to DOE website 6-27-12.

Update: ExxonMobil Resumes Planned Operations at Its 149,500 b/d Torrance, California Refinery June 27 after Resolving Breakdown That Triggered Flaring June 26

ExxonMobil Corp. on Wednesday resumed planned operations at its Torrance refinery after resolving a breakdown that triggered flaring on Tuesday, according to a spokeswoman. The company expected to meet its contractual commitments.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/27/refinery-operations-exxon-orranceidUSH5E8GG00E20120627?feedType=RSS&feedName=industrialsSector&rpc=43> Posted to DOE website 6-28-12.

Wet Gas Compressor Malfunction Leads to Flaring at Shell's 156,400 b/d Martinez, California Refinery June 28

Shell Oil Co. on Thursday reported a wet gas compressor malfunction led to flaring at its Martinez refinery, according to a filing with California pollution regulators. Operators had contained the flaring at the time of the filing.

Reuters, 02:39 June 28, 2012. Posted to DOE website 6-28-12.