Explosion and Fire at Caribbean Petroleum Tank Terminal

Chemical Safety Board

ABSTRACT

On October 23, 2009, normal tank filling operation became catastrophic when a 5,000,000 gallon atmospheric tank overflowed for approximately 30 minutes at the Caribbean Petroleum terminal in Bayamon, Puerto Rico. The developing vapor cloud enveloped part of the tank farm and reached the waste water treatment area where it ignited. A flash fire and explosion ensued and the contents of the tank burned for 2.5 days. Neighboring communities were evacuated and oil contaminated the nearby wetlands. This incident revealed a number of safety system deficiencies at the facility and gaps in the regulatory and industry standards addressing overfill prevention. This presentation will provide an overview of the US Chemical Safety Board's Caribbean Petroleum investigation and discuss recommendations made by the CSB to prevent a similar incident.