



Wednesday, August 10, 2005

Tanker rolls, ethanol spills

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Police evacuated homes at Indiana 32 and County Road 625E Wednesday after a tanker hauling ethanol overturned, spilling part of its load.

Indiana 32 was blocked to all traffic and people were out of their homes several hours as emergency workers, fearing the flammable fuel would spark, raced to stabilize it. They struggled to remain cool wearing turnout gear in near 90-degree temperatures with high humidity.

"It's a very volatile situation," Crawfordsville Fire Chief Todd Barton said. The Crawfordsville Fire Department was one of many to assist Darlington Fire Department with the spill. Darlington officials were unavailable for comment Wednesday.

Motorists continued to try to drive into the area as uniformed, plain clothed and off-duty police scrambled to stop them.

Barton estimated about 100 emergency personnel from several fire and police agencies were on hand. One homeowner was pressed into service to block traffic on County Road 625E. Still motorists tried to rush by him. Officials blocked semi traffic at Dover.

Darlington Volunteer Firefighters sprayed foam on the fuel but still feared it would ignite. They moved everyone back further and called in special hazardous materials handling teams from Wayne Township in Indianapolis, Greencastle and Cloverdale, Barton said.

Officials did not know by press time Wednesday how much fuel was spilled. They expected to be on the scene until after midnight. Barton said a clean-up crew hired by the company that owns the overturned semitrailer would remove the fuel once it was stabilized.

No emergency workers were injured as of press time Wednesday, but those closer to the fuel underwent a decontamination process and medical examination.

A black car was involved in an accident with the semitrailer before the truck overturned, Montgomery County Police Chief Deputy Bob Coudret said. Police still are investigating. Officials believed one or two persons in the car were taken to St. Clare Medical Center, but did not have victims' names or conditions by press time Wednesday. They were unsure how the wreck occurred.

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