

Two burned in maintenance accident at the Utica Energy ethanol plant

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Two people received treatment for burns sustained while working in a storage vat at the Utica Energy plant on State Highway 91 west of Oshkosh on Wednesday.

Jay Stoflet, a spokesman for the company, said they were doing routine maintenance about 90 feet down at 100-foot storage "column" when a pressure valve sprayed them with hot water. He said neither person had major injuries, but both would be transported to a hospital as a precaution.

Emergency responders from the towns of Utica and Nekimi and the city of Oshkosh were called to the plant at 4995 State Highway 91 just before 3 p.m. Wednesday for an initial report that two people had been badly burned and trapped underground while cleaning a storage tank.

The Flight For Life emergency helicopter was called to the scene shortly after 3 p.m.

Stoflet described the response as mostly "over precautionary" but "valued," adding "if we do have a major issue, we know they'll get here in time."

He said the plant's emergency procedures kicked in immediately when the accident happened and both men are in stable condition. He said the company has not yet determined the cause of the hot water leak that burned the men.

The Northwestern will update this story as more information becomes available.