

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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CHLORINE TANK CAR RELEASE IN
NEW MARTINSVILLE, WEST VIRGINIA
ON AUGUST 27, 2016

Accident No.: DCA16SH002

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Interview of: DAVE DEITRICK

Axiall Corporation
15696 Energy Road
Proctor, West Virginia

Thursday,
September 1, 2016

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: PAUL STANCIL
Investigator-in-Charge

APPEARANCES:

PAUL STANCIL, Investigator-in-Charge
Senior Hazmat Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

JOHN VORDERBRUEGGEN, Division Chief
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Investigations
National Transportation Safety Board

WILLIAM WILMOTH, Esq.
Steptoe & Johnson, PLLC
(On behalf of Axiall Corporation and Mr. Deitrick)

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:00 p.m.)

1
2
3 MR. STANCIL: Okay. Today is September 1, 2016. It's 3:00
4 p.m. My name is Paul Stancil. I am a senior hazardous materials
5 accident investigator with the National Transportation Safety
6 Board. We are here at the Axiall Corporation, 15696 Energy Road,
7 Proctor, West Virginia. This is in reference to NTSB Accident
8 Number DCA16SH002.

9 We are here interviewing Mr. David Deitrick, who was the
10 incident commander on the day of the accident under investigation,
11 the release of chlorine from a tank car on August 27, 2016.

12 So we'll go around the table and introduce ourselves.

13 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: I'm John Vorderbrueggen. I'm the chief
14 Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Accident Investigations at the
15 NTSB.

16 MR. DEITRICK: I'm Dave Deitrick. I'm the shift
17 superintendent at Axiall Corporation.

18 MR. WILMOTH: And I'm Bill Wilmoth. I'm a lawyer retained by
19 Axiall to help it in its investigation and I'm here at
20 Mr. Deitrick's request.

INTERVIEW OF DAVID DEITRICK

21
22 BY MR. STANCIL:

23 Q. Okay. So Mr. Deitrick, could you tell us a little bit about
24 your background and your duties here at Axiall?

25 A. Yeah. I've got about 14 years, almost 14 years with the

1 company, PPG/Axiall combined. I hired in as a supervisor off the
2 street into the chlorine department, a shift foreman. I worked in
3 that capacity for roughly 5 years, was offered the opportunity for
4 a promotion to go to a day supervisor's job. I worked in that
5 capacity, in the chlorine department again, for about 6 years.

6 January of 2014, I was asked to transfer to another
7 department in the same capacity. I worked in the cal-hypo
8 department, was there for about 14 months and that leads up to
9 about the last year and three quarter I've been in this capacity
10 as a shift superintendent with Axiall.

11 I am one of four shift superintendents. We work a rotating
12 shift, 12 hours on and 12 hours off -- or 12-hour days, 12-hour
13 nights, I should say. Basically, on the back shifts we are plant
14 manager, safety coordinator, maintenance, H/R. We're the eyes and
15 ears out here on the back shifts, and an incident command in any
16 situation that requires that.

17 Q. Excellent. So I understand the incident occurred on your
18 watch. Could you tell us what happened that day?

19 A. Yeah. I'll start about where the incident started. Well,
20 I'll start a little bit before that. We relieved roughly at 4:30
21 and 4:30, so my shift started about 4:30 that morning. And been a
22 normal morning up until about 8:35, 8:34, somewhere in that
23 vicinity. I'd just been on the phone with the chlorine shift
24 foreman who was having a problem in the department finding some
25 piping. He had a piping failure and I was going down to help him.

1 I was walking out of the lab building that we're currently
2 in, which is where our office is, walking to our truck, and the
3 guard that was on duty, one of the two guards that was on duty
4 that morning, made an announcement on the radio for all E crew
5 personnel to report to west chlorine, possible chlorine release.

6 I looked towards west chlorine. I saw nothing at that point,
7 so I wasn't quite sure what was going on. So I talked to the
8 chlorine shift foreman, and at that point he didn't see anything,
9 and then within 10 seconds, it was like, oh, my gosh, there it is.
10 So he told me what he saw. He saw something down in the scale
11 shed area, which is our loading area, and didn't know what it was
12 yet at that point. He grabbed an SCBA and headed that direction
13 to make -- number one, for accountability, to make sure everybody
14 was accounted for; but number two, to try and determine the
15 source, what was going on.

16 I was in the truck already, headed to the chlorine
17 department, and I got to the ACL department, which is the first
18 department north of where the rail car would be, and I saw, at
19 that point in time, a green cloud out on the ground. And I knew
20 then that it was probably a big enough incident that we should
21 staff the EOC. I guess our first responsibility as the shift
22 superintendent on any incidence is determine whether it's a Level
23 1 or a Level 2. Level 1 is something we can handle on scene and
24 we don't need support. Level 2 is something that we would start
25 the EOC for.

1 So I told Jason at that point in time that I was going back
2 up to the EOC to get -- to start that process and he had command
3 of the scene itself. The E crew was starting to filter into the
4 area, so they all had SCBAs on, and I was on my route back up
5 here.

6 I believe it was shortly after I made the turn down there, I
7 yelled at the guard on the radio to go ahead and start making the
8 notifications that we needed to staff the EOC. Didn't know how
9 big it was going to be at this point, but it would be better to
10 get some help coming in.

11 So I got back up into the office and my first phone call was
12 to the Marshall County 911 dispatcher. And that was roughly at
13 8:41, I believe. Told them the situation, what we had, that we
14 didn't truly know what the size of it was going to be yet, but we
15 knew we had a liquid chlorine leak in a rail car. And I asked for
16 Route 2 to be shut down north and south of the plant. We didn't
17 need traffic coming through here.

18 The lady I spoke with took some more information and she said
19 that she'd take care of it, and I asked specifically about
20 notifying Tom Hart, which is the Marshall County EMA director, and
21 she said that she already had that taken care of.

22 Got off the phone with her and I'm talking back and forth
23 with the guard at that point to determine what contacts had been
24 made. And at that point it was probably, I think, around 8:50
25 that I notified -- I told him that I was going to call Monroe

1 County dispatch, which is the Ohio side of the river. And I told
2 them exactly the same thing. I said we've got a chlorine release,
3 don't know anything more than details, other than the fact that
4 it's a liquid chlorine release and that we needed to shut down
5 Route 7, which is the Ohio side. And again, they took a little
6 bit more information, my name and a contact number and things like
7 that, and they said okay.

8 Again, I'm talking back and forth with the guard at the time
9 and I ask him if he had made any notifications to the barge
10 traffic, the locks and dams. There was a barge from -- we found
11 out from the shift foreman in the powerhouse that there was a
12 barge north of the plant that was coming down the river. We
13 wanted to try and get that stopped.

14 So Pete called down to the lockmaster, told them what we had.
15 He said he would take care of trying to contact the barge. We
16 were trying to -- he had asked to have the river shut down. And
17 at that point he said that he didn't have the authority to do
18 that, but that the Coast Guard would have to be notified to make
19 that decision. And they gave him a phone number for the Coast
20 Guard and he transferred the Coast Guard number to me. And at
21 that point, then I made the notification to the Coast Guard.

22 Q. Did the Coast Guard shut down the river?

23 A. Coast Guard did end up shutting down the river. It was after
24 multiple phone calls. The gentleman that I spoke with up there, I
25 believe, was a petty officer. And I don't remember the title of

1 the next gentleman, but it was a supervisor; it was a step up.
2 And he called to get clarification and make sure that's what we
3 truly wanted, was to shut down the river. And at that point they
4 took care of that.

5 By then we had a few people that were filtering into the
6 plant for assistance and there were some communications between
7 them and myself, as far as what capacity they were filling when
8 they got here into the plant. And we started to staff the EO,
9 emergency operations center. It was probably in the neighborhood
10 of, I think, 9:45, 9:50 when we started getting the different
11 positions within our EOC filled.

12 Q. Okay. So what were some of the first actions that you took
13 once the EOC was assembled?

14 A. Well, maybe I guess I better back up a little bit. I skipped
15 a lot of details.

16 We had sounded the emergency evacuation alarm within 5
17 minutes of me being notified that there was a situation, and it
18 was for all non-essential personnel. On a weekend you don't have
19 very many non-essential personnel. All the operators are
20 considered essential and they stay and do a orderly shutdown of
21 their departments. So we did have a few contractors in and we had
22 a few non-essential personnel. When we sounded that alarm, then
23 they responded. So we had started that process. The different
24 departments then started their shutdown process.

25 By 9:00, I had touched base with each of the supervisors in

1 the areas to determine accountability, were all the employees
2 present and accounted for. And at that point they were. And I'd
3 been hearing on the radio the whole time -- in addition to talking
4 on the phone, I've got radio up there that's on a scan mode so it
5 picks up every channel. So I'm hearing a lot going on in the
6 backgrounds without ever having to make phone calls. I'm still
7 gathering information. So I'm hearing conversations in the cal-
8 hypo department, I'm hearing conversations in power, I'm hearing
9 conversations in caustic. So I've got a feel for what's going on
10 in the departments without ever making contact.

11 But like I said, by 9:00, I had touched base and everyone in
12 the plant was accounted for. Jody Rine, the nurse, had been
13 notified also, and she was in the plant very quickly. And when
14 she got here, she called and gave me an update on what she had in
15 the dispensary as far as treatments and where she stood and she
16 basically handled everything over there. She and the second guard
17 -- we have two guards on shift at at time -- handled all the cases
18 over there.

19 Then by the time, I guess, the support personnel came in, we
20 were in the process -- all the departments had been shut down and
21 we started kind of doing some surveying, you know, what could we
22 have missed, did we shut down everything safely. We started
23 talking amongst ourselves, and the operations section chief up
24 there made some contacts to the different departments and was
25 asking specific questions. And when we thought it was safe for

1 them to go back in, they went in and did a -- not a recon, but a
2 survey of the area, making sure that we didn't have hydrogen out
3 in the powerhouse, that we didn't have ammonia out in caustic,
4 that we had shut down indeed orderly.

5 Q. Were you tracking the progression of this chlorine release or
6 plume from the plant?

7 A. What I basically had was a bird's eye view just as this. My
8 office is on the second floor of this. I was watching out the
9 window. And one thing I did communicate to each of the agencies,
10 Monroe County and Coast Guard and Marshall County, was that the
11 winds were out of the north, that everything was moving north to
12 south. It was definitely -- I could see -- it was like a start-
13 stop line. You could see where it originated and it was going
14 that way.

15 So I was watching the cloud roll by, but I could not tell how
16 far it was affecting. I did get updates from the personnel
17 driving into the plant from the different locations on where they
18 were at and when they could smell it, basically. And but as far
19 as me physically seeing it, I couldn't tell.

20 Q. So were -- it would've been up to the local jurisdictions to
21 deal with what was going on beyond your perimeter?

22 A. And -- yes. And what they then -- from what I understand,
23 they did a very fine job of that. They moved the perimeter back
24 one time in New Martinsville because they felt it was stronger
25 than they wanted it to be down there.

1 Q. Okay. So what -- you mentioned Monroe County, Marshall
2 County. So you're dealing with the emergency management folks in
3 those counties?

4 A. Correct. Yeah.

5 Q. You had a liaison or a contact --

6 A. We actually called the dispatches at the sheriff's office in
7 each one of them, and they relayed the information.

8 Q. Did they send any personnel here?

9 A. Not to the plant. They sent personnel to the roadblocks, or
10 they sent out the signal to block the roads. But no, they did not
11 send anybody to the plant.

12 Q. Okay. So there was no unified command set up?

13 A. Not at that -- no. No, sir. It was not.

14 Q. At least not here? It was --

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. If there was one --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. -- then it would've been amongst themselves?

19 A. There was, I would call it a staging area north of plant.
20 It's where the contractor that we had called in, the SPSI, and we
21 actually had phone calls from the Wheeling Fire Department hazmat
22 crew. They were staging up there in case we needed something.
23 Marshall County had told them what was going on, and they came
24 down and were ready if we needed them. But they all staged north
25 of the plant at the, basically the first roadblock site. And I

1 can't even tell you for sure where it's at, but I thought it was
2 the first -- right at the bottom of the four lanes, which would be
3 3 or 4 miles north of here.

4 Q. You mentioned SPSI. What services did they provide?

5 A. The hazmat group and the CQA personnel are the ones that
6 called them in. And I didn't have any direct dealings with them,
7 so anything I'd say there would be total speculation. But I
8 believe they were the ones that did the initial survey on the car
9 overnight after it had been completely under control, after our
10 hazmat team had been in there.

11 Q. So they were more with respect to the tank car --

12 A. Absolutely. Correct.

13 Q. -- and handling the tank car?

14 A. Absolutely. Yes, sir.

15 Q. Okay. As far as dealing with the aftermath of the
16 response --

17 A. Nothing.

18 Q. -- that was --

19 A. Nothing.

20 Q. -- not them? Okay.

21 So how long did the event progress? It was -- so there was a
22 release, and when was an evacuation called off?

23 A. We started letting different groups go back into the
24 department, different operators go back into the department, I'm
25 going to say between 12:30 and 1:00, somewhere in that vicinity.

1 And that was after we had already had personnel in full gear,
2 knowing that it was secure.

3 Q. And what about off-site? Do you know anything about the
4 evacuation perimeter or exclusion zone beyond the --

5 A. As far as when they were let back in?

6 Q. Well, for instance, how extensive was it on the plant
7 perimeter?

8 A. I can tell you as far south it went was -- my understanding,
9 it went down do what used to be the Candlelight Restaurant, which
10 is in North Steelton. It's barely into town on the north end of
11 New Martinsville is where they -- they evacuated to that point.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And north end, they evacuated Kent. Now, Marshall County had
14 called back a couple of times and asked me whether we wanted to
15 evacuate Kent, and I told them at this point, I said I can look
16 out the window and I can tell you precisely where the cloud starts
17 and stops, and there was nothing even in the north end of our
18 plant, nothing on this side of Tunnel Road, which is what
19 separates our plant between east and west.

20 We had personnel that were standing down by our fire truck
21 garage without any respiratory protection. It just wasn't needed.
22 It all went that way. And I told them that. But as far as to
23 help make them make -- or help them with their decision-making in
24 how far to evacuate north, they did end up evacuating Kent
25 precautionarily.

1 Q. Okay. Was there any problem with communications between you
2 and the local agencies here or the Coast Guard?

3 A. The biggest problem, from my standpoint, was the numerous
4 phone calls. No, it was an over-communication problem, if
5 anything.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. No. The numbers that we had were all good, and honestly,
8 Marshall County 911 did a phenomenal job. There must -- and I'm
9 not familiar enough with it, and I've talked to R.J. and to John
10 Hirschfield. I'd love to get to know more about it. But when you
11 call something in to Marshall County, there must be like a
12 communication tree that goes out and they make the notifications.
13 Because I had the state police called; they knew about it without
14 us having involving them. There were other agencies in the area.
15 Like I said, the Wheeling Police -- or Wheeling Firefighters
16 hazmat crew, they were notified, and that was all done through
17 Marshall County, is my understanding.

18 Q. So was there any confusion, such as police driving into the
19 zone or --

20 A. No, sir.

21 Q. -- potential issues like that?

22 A. No, sir.

23 Q. Great.

24 BY MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN:

25 Q. We probably should've asked other people this question, but

1 what kind of outreach do you folks do with the community in
2 awareness that they should have?

3 A. That's probably a question that is truly better for someone
4 else.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. As far as knowledge and understanding of the potentials here,
7 you mean?

8 Q. Yeah. Do you pass out -- do you mail fliers out, tell them,
9 you know, what they should be aware of or --

10 A. I honestly can't answer that.

11 Q. -- do they know what shelter in place means, things like
12 that?

13 A. We have got an alarm for the Kent area and we test it weekly,
14 so they are aware that we do have alarms and evacuations,
15 potentially. But as far as the actual outreach, that would be a
16 question that's better for someone else.

17 Q. Okay. Do you know who that person would be we should ask?

18 A. I would say probably R.J. or John, would be my guess.

19 Q. What's their last names?

20 A. R.J. Feldmeyer (ph.) or John Hirschfield.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. They may know. And the only reason I'm picking them is
23 because they're over the EH&S Department. And if not, I'm sure
24 they can point you in the right direction.

25 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: Why didn't we ask John?

1 MR. STANCIL: Because you just thought of it.

2 BY MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN:

3 Q. Well, how -- when did you -- what time have you determined to
4 have been a time when essentially the tank car was empty?

5 A. We didn't know if it was empty and we didn't know what we --
6 we didn't know what we had at that point. I mean, all we knew is
7 that a tank car was leaking out the outer shell. We didn't know
8 if it was punctured a foot from the top, if it was punctured clear
9 on the bottom or somewhere in between.

10 I'm going to say roughly 9:40 -- 9:30, 9:40, 9:50, somewhere
11 in that vicinity, the green let up, and that's all I had to go by,
12 was the fact that I didn't see as much green rolling by to the
13 south. And like I said, our hazmat crew was on scene, and I
14 believe by 10:00, they had made that initial assessment. And at
15 that point, it was no longer leaking, I believe is the timeline.
16 I don't have the timeline with me, but --

17 Q. So you had a hazmat crew in the area and they --

18 A. Our own.

19 Q. Your own hazmat?

20 A. We got ahold of our on-call hazmat crew and they came into
21 the plant and they were the ones that were the first on to look at
22 the -- to make an assessment on the car.

23 BY MR. STANCIL:

24 Q. In your tenure here with Axiall, has there ever been an
25 incident similar to this or of the same magnitude as this?

1 A. No, sir. No, sir.

2 Q. What would be the next worse accident that's happened here?

3 A. Accident or --

4 Q. Or incident?

5 MR. STANCIL: Release of chlorine.

6 MR. DEITRICK: Release?

7 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: Release.

8 MR. DEITRICK: We had a -- gosh, a release probably, but
9 within the last year, year and a half, but it was over a slow
10 duration. We had a cell that was not capped in and, or was not
11 being -- the chlorine was -- that was being produced from a cell
12 was not getting into the chlorine header. It was basically being
13 pumped to the cell room. And that would probably be the biggest,
14 and I don't remember the magnitude of it, the actual poundage on
15 it, but it was nowhere near what we believe this may be.

16 BY MR. STANCIL:

17 Q. So in terms of this accident -- or we call them accidents --

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. -- or incidents -- how much chlorine was released?

20 A. I honestly can't tell you that. I can tell you that it was a
21 loaded car, but I have not heard how full the car was. I can tell
22 you that a loaded car can hold up to 90 tons. You know that as
23 well as I do. I don't deal with CQAs, end of the --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. -- the loading end and all that. I would guess it was fairly

1 close, but I, again, don't have that in front of me.

2 Q. Okay. So the worse case would be a fully loaded --

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. -- the full load of the car?

5 A. Yes, sir. And based on the position of the --

6 Q. And that's about how many gallons?

7 A. -- failure. I can't answer that -- without going back and
8 getting my charts.

9 Q. But 90 tons?

10 A. Yeah, 90 tons, 180,000 pounds.

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. That sounds even more impressive.

13 Q. Yeah. Okay. All right.

14 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: I can't think of anything.

15 BY MR. STANCIL:

16 Q. Is there anything that you can think of that would be
17 important, an important aspect that we should consider in our
18 investigation?

19 A. Well, not right off.

20 Q. Any off-the-bat lessons learned from your experience on this?

21 A. My lesson learned is when you expect the worst -- we do
22 scenarios and you expect the worst. The worst can actually happen
23 was my takeaway from this. This was one of -- a tabletop scenario
24 we had one time was a rupture of a vessel, chlorine vessel. And
25 you do it thinking that it just can't really ever happen, and it

1 really happened.

2 Q. So would you describe this as a worst-case event for this
3 plant? Is there any other potential --

4 A. The only other potential would be a scale tank, a scale tank
5 failure or a barge failure. But, I mean, it's a vessel failure
6 that you just, you don't think is possible, but it -- again, I
7 think we've just seen that it is possible.

8 Q. Well, any other -- any questions for us?

9 A. Not really.

10 Q. Okay.

11 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: Great.

12 MR. STANCIL: Okay. Well, thank you, sir.

13 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: Thank you very much.

14 MR. DEITRICK: You're welcome.

15 MR. STANCIL: Mr. Deitrick, thank you for your assistance on
16 this. We appreciate your time as well.

17 MR. DEITRICK: No problem.

18 MR. STANCIL: And we'll go ahead and terminate the interview
19 now. Thank you.

20 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

21

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: CHLORINE TANK CAR RELEASE IN
 NEW MARTINSVILLE, WEST VIRGINIA
 ON AUGUST 27, 2016
 Interview of David Deitrick

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA16SH002

PLACE: Proctor, West Virginia

DATE: September 1, 2016

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.

Karen A. Stockhausen
Transcriber

TRANSCRIPTION ERROR FORM – PAGE 1

NTSB INVESTIGATION - DCA16SH002

INTERVIEWEE Dave Dietrich

INTERVIEW DATE: 9-1-16

The following mistakes in the transcription of the interviewee identified above were noted by the interviewee as follows:

PAGE	LINE	MISTAKE	CORRECTION
No. <u>3</u>	No. <u>2</u>	<u>Deitrick</u>	<u>Dietrich</u>
No. <u>4</u>	No. <u>9</u>	<u>Deitrick</u>	<u>Dietrich</u>
No. <u>4</u>	No. <u>16</u>	<u>Deitrick</u>	<u>Dietrich</u>
No. <u>4</u>	No. <u>21</u>	<u>Deitrick</u>	<u>Dietrich</u>
No. <u>4</u>	No. <u>23</u>	<u>Deitrick</u>	<u>Dietrich</u>
No. <u>5</u>	No. <u>8</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>11</u>
No. <u>6</u>	No. <u>17</u>	<u>ACL</u>	<u>HCL</u>
No. <u>20</u>	No. <u>14</u>	<u>Deitrick</u>	<u>Dietrich</u>
No. <u>20</u>	No. <u>17</u>	<u>Deitrick</u>	<u>Dietrich</u>
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