

Just One Week After Trump Rolled Back Safety Measures, Chemical Plant Explosion Rocks Texas Town

"This facility has a track record of violating the Clean Air Act."

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Region: [USA](#)

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Concerns about air quality [lingered](#) Wednesday following a major early morning explosion at a chemical plant in Port Neches, Texas that shot a fireball into the sky.

The disaster at the TPC Group-owned facility roughly 94 miles west of Houston took place a week after the Trump administration [rolled back](#) safety rules meant to protect workers and people who live near chemical plants. In light of the timing, Catherine Fraser, Environment Texas's clean air associate, [called](#) Wednesday's explosion "a timely warning that state and federal officials need to do more to keep communities safe."

"It shook our house twice," Shawn Dunlap, who lives in neighboring Nederland, [told](#) NBC News. "It was just like a bomb going off." Twitter user @souljaslim52 [put it](#) another way: "shit blew tf up."

According to a statement from TPC Group, the incident occurred at 1:00am local time. The company said it "cannot speak to the cause of the incident or the extent of damage." The Port Neches Police Department, in a [statement](#) posted to Facebook, said, "There's extensive damage throughout the city."

Area residents [reported damaged homes](#), with some suffering shattered glass and blown-off doors. Three workers at the plant also suffered minor injuries, the company said.

"Throughout the morning more booms could be heard in the area as firefighters attempted to control the blaze," reported Beaumont's *KBMT*.

Local ABC affiliate *KTRK* [reported](#) that the chemical burning is butadiene, which the EPA [classifies](#) as carcinogenic.

Area residents captured images and sounds of the explosion:

WOW: Incredible video shared with us of the Port Neches plant explosion earlier this morning, not far from Beaumont. Eddie Ramirez writes: "My video cameras caught the moment impact. I hope and pray that everyone is ok." Latest updates: <https://t.co/XTy9gwimgB> | [#HTownRush](#)
<pic.twitter.com/pF63DrTFZL>

— KHOU 11 News Houston (@KHOU) [November 27, 2019](#)

TAKE A LOOK | Dramatic front camera video of the TPC Group Plant explosion in Port Neches

READ MORE: <https://t.co/FGYHV2w1p7> pic.twitter.com/pwq08qwCCY

— 12NewsNow (@12NewsNow) [November 27, 2019](#)

Environment Texas's Fraser, in her statement, pointed to the plant's history as cause for particular concern.

"This facility has a track record of violating the Clean Air Act," she said, "with five other illegal emissions events just in 2019, emitting carcinogenic 1,3 butadiene and other chemicals, and a history of community complaints."

"According to the EPA, the TPC Plant has been in non-compliance 12 separate quarters over the last 3 years, and has received 7 formal enforcement actions over the last 5 years. According to the TCEQ, the chemical of most concern is butadiene," Fraser continued. "The TPC plant emitted 61,379 pounds of butadiene in 2018. Butadiene is a known human carcinogen."

Environmental justice expert **Mustafa Santiago Ali** weighed in on the explosion with a brief statement on Twitter. He noted that the Trump administration's move last week to finalize the weakening of the Chemical Disaster Rule and chided the president for "putting more people's lives in danger."

When will they learn? Every time the [#Trump](#) Administration & [#EPA](#) rolls back a [#environmental](#) rule meant to protect your health or your life, something bad happens! 3 injured as Texas plant explosion releases chemical plume <https://t.co/EUMPuacWEC> pic.twitter.com/oNKBwq1QOV

— Mustafa Santiago Ali (@EjinAction) [November 27, 2019](#)

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Featured image: An explosion occurred at roughly 1:00 am Wednesday at a chemical plant in Port Neches, Texas. (Screengrab from video courtesy Derek Ross Hall via Twitter)

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