



Friday, January 15, 2010 |
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S.R. 161 Reopens After Hazmat Situation

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A hazmat situation closes a portion of eastbound and westbound state Route 161 Wednesday afternoon.

NBC 4



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UPDATE: One lane of westbound S.R. 161 opens to traffic after a hazmat situation closed a portion of state Route 161 for hours Wednesday afternoon.

By [Donna Willis](#) | Web Content Coordinator

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COLUMBUS, Ohio—A hazmat situation closed a portion of westbound and eastbound state Route 161

Wednesday afternoon.

NBC 4 reported with the FAST FACTS.

A box-type truck with hazardous materials caught fire in the westbound lanes of S.R. 161 near Hamilton Road on the city's East Side, near New Albany.

Plain Township and Columbus fire departments and a hazmat crew responded to the level-1 hazmat situation at about 12:40 p.m.

The truck contained seven 55-gallon barrels of toluene (a flammable chemical) and a load of lithium batteries.

Six of the seven barrels were full.

Toluene is used in consumer products, building materials or furnishings that contribute to indoor air pollution and in pesticide products.

The lithium batteries were being hauled for recycling.

Apparently, the batteries caused the fire. Chemicals leaked out of the batteries and caught fire when they hit water, according to fire officials.

It's very flammable and explosive so that's why the big concern—there being out in the open area. It's much better because there is nothing else around, said CFD Battalion Chief David Whiting.

The fire was contained by 1 p.m. and before it reached the barrels of flammable chemical.

Hazmat crews continued to work on cleanup.

One lane of eastbound S.R. 161 opened to traffic at 1:45 p.m. The other lanes opened to traffic before 4 p.m.

One westbound lane remained closed at New Albany Road at 4 p.m.

All lanes reopened to traffic at about 6 p.m. Wednesday.

The detour for westbound traffic was north on New Albany Road to New Albany Road W. to Central College Road to Hamilton Road to S.R. 161, according to the city of Columbus.

Motorists should expect delays.

The EPA was notified.

No more immediate information was available.

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[Flag Comment](#) Posted by Jason6644 on January 08, 2010 at 10:54 am

Geocam, It actually happens every day. The DOT does not have any segregation restrictions on 4.3 (Dangerous when Wet) and 3 (Flammable) materials. Secondly, the Lithium Batteries are not considered RCRA Hazardous because they are going for recycling. And yes, Road Flares (4.1) material which are required to be submerged in water during shipment under a special permit and Gasoline a class (3) material can legally be transported together with no segregation restrictions. This happens quite often too.

But, fireworks are considered an explosive, and must be transported independent of xylene another class 3 material.

The issue here is not that they broke any laws by transporting incompatible materials, it is that either A) the generator or offerer of the waste packaged the materials incorrectly and did not follow DOT regulations. (Lithium Batteries are required to have all terminals taped, sealed, or somehow covered from contact with other terminal, and submerged under a specific type of oil) or B) the Veolia employees did not package them correctly.

Lithium Batteries are the biggest headache for a hazardous waste company due to the required handling & packaging methods as well as the safety hazards involved.

Please, before you make a comment as you did previously, educate yourself, because the only thing you said correct was that someone will get fined, and most likely the generator of the waste because it is their responsibility cradle to grave. If it is found that the Veolia employees were at fault, they could be liable for some or all fines.

[Flag Comment](#) Posted by geocam on January 06, 2010 at 4:06 pm

What kind of a dope loads lithium batteries AND toluene on the same truck? What's he going to transport next - road flares and gasoline? How about a big load of fireworks and a couple hundred gallons of xylene?!? Somebody needs to be fined, and fined, and fined again.

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