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5 known dead in Connecticut power plant blast

Last Updated: Sunday, February 7, 2010 | 9:02 PM ET [Comments 113](#)[Recommend 107](#)

[CBC News](#)



Smoke rises from the Kleen Energy plant in Middletown, Conn., on Sunday after an explosion that officials said killed at least five people and injured at least 12 others. (Mick Bolduc/The Courant/Associated Press)

Five people are known to be dead and at least 12 injured following a powerful explosion Sunday at a natural gas plant under construction in Middletown, Conn., the mayor's office said.

Middletown deputy fire marshal Al Santostefano said crews were still searching the rubble for survivors of the explosion, which happened at 11:17 a.m. ET.

"They are taking the building apart piece by piece now, the part that collapsed and came in, they are taking that apart in sections piece by piece, very carefully," Santostefano said.

Mayor Sebastian Giuliano said it's difficult to tell how many people were in the power plant at the time of the blast because multiple contractors were working on it and had their own employee lists.



Al Santostefano, deputy fire marshal for Middletown, Conn., speaks to reporters on Sunday. (CBC) Officials had said earlier that 50 construction workers were in the section of the plant where the explosion happened.

Santostefano said he didn't know what caused the blast, which shook houses up to 16 kilometres away.

The 620-megawatt plant was being built to produce energy, primarily using natural gas. Santostefano said workers were purging the gas lines, a procedure he called a "blow-down," when the explosion occurred.

Middlesex Hospital spokesman Brian Albert said one seriously injured person was transferred to Hartford Hospital and doctors were evaluating another person who might also be moved to Hartford for more intensive care.

Two people were treated and released, and eight others were being treated for broken bones, abdominal injuries, blunt-force trauma and other kinds of injuries consistent with being caught in an explosion, Albert said.

Hartford Hospital said two patients were brought directly there after the blast, in addition to the one transferred later from Middlesex.

Officials had not released the conditions of the injured people by Sunday evening, although they said at least a dozen people had injuries ranging from minor to very serious.

Connecticut Gov. M. Jodi Rell visited the scene after calling out a specialized search-and-rescue team to help firefighters.

The state's Emergency Operations Center in Hartford also was activated, and the Department of Public Health was called to provide tents at the scene for shelter and medical triage.

Rell said the emergency teams were expected to work through the night and into Monday.

The U.S. Chemical Safety Board is mobilizing an investigation team from Colorado and hopes to have the workers on the scene Monday, spokesman Daniel Horowitz said.

Safety board investigators have done extensive work on the issue of gas line purging since an explosion last year at a factory in North Carolina killed four people.

Just last week, the board voted to recommend that national and international code writers strengthen their guidelines to require outdoor venting of gas lines or an approved safety plan to do it indoors.

With files from The Associated Press

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[Cockroach King](#) wrote:Posted 2010/02/08
at 8:20 AM ETUlp. Bad, bad news.

Now I know why NIMBYs are so adamant that no LNG plants will be built in the US.

BOOM!

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- [2](#)

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Bard29 wrote:Posted 2010/02/08

at 8:11 AM ETtapilot wrote: "Natural gas is used as fuel to produce heat. What other uses for natural gas are more valuable? What other uses for natural gas even exist?"

For transportation -- fuel for cars and buses. That's what the Chinese do with it.

- [5](#)
- [1](#)

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canadave wrote:Posted 2010/02/08

at 8:05 AM ETMPW Calgary wrote:

"Just remember folk, a nuclear power plant is a better way to generate large baseload electricity. Nuclear-fired plants are much safer and they are more environmentally friendly than natural gas or coal-fired plants.

If this fatality accident had occurred at a nuclear power plant, it would be headline news around the world. There is a real double standard when nuclear plants are involved. but when such an accident occurs at a non-nuclear plant, well.....it's just another news story."

Well, MPW Calgary, the problem is, if a nuclear power plant explodes, a lot more people could die than the unfortunate five who died at this power plant. That's why a nuclear power plant explosion is 'headline news around the world.'

And besides....this Connecticut-based story is headline news in Canada, so I think it's doing quite well for itself, on the face of it.

Nuclear power plants may be "safer", but they are not necessarily "safe". Ask the people who live around Chernobyl.

- [3](#)
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easyzf wrote:Posted 2010/02/08

at 7:45 AM ETThe Government of Ontario and TransCanada believe that building an even larger plant in South East Oakville closer than even than this plant to schools and houses is the way of the future.

I disagree.

Even if you ignore the clear safety and health concerns of the residents, high lighted in this mini disaster, which Premier McGuinty's has (the town is opposed, the local MP is opposed, and even the local liberal MPP is "disappointed in his government") the project with it's take or pay guarantee provision and guaranteed return on capital will be an economic disaster on the scale of E-health for the people of Ontario.

How often today do we look at projects and say "that could have been done better". Ontario is about to start an other one.

Larry Scott

- [3](#)
- [7](#)

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hell-no wrote:Posted 2010/02/08

at 7:38 AM ETmy heart go out to the family s of the injured and the deceasedsuch a tragic thing to happen

- [14](#)
- [1](#)