Cold Storage Safety Fatality File

Two workers killed in ammonia gas leak in cold-storage unit

Two labourers working in a potato cold-storage unit died and two were seriously injured after inhaling ammonia gas that leaked following an explosion in a pipeline late on Saturday night. The incident occurred in the Itaunja police station area.

The injured were admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU) of King George’s Medical University (KGMU) Trauma Centre. Their condition is improving gradually, according to the police.

Sources said the control valve of a pipeline carrying ammonia to the Vindeshwari cold-storage facility exploded, causing panic. Four labourers working in the unit at the time inhaled the ammonia. The deceased were identified as Sitapur residents Mishrilal (28) and Dharmendra (27), while Paramanda and Vinod were injured and moved to KGMU. About half-a-kilometre of the area around the facility was cordoned off as a precautionary measure as the fire department brought the gas leak under control.

“We have registered an FIR against the cold storage owner, identified as Santosh Pandey, and manager, who is yet unidentified, under sections 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder), 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide) and 269 (negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) of the IPC. As per the information there was an explosion in the oxygen supply and caused a leak of ammonia gas,” said Bakshi ka Talab Circle Officer (CO) Hirdesh Katheriya.

Lucknow (Rural) SP Hirdesh Kumar said experts were trying to figure out why the explosion occurred. Action would be taken based on their report, he added.

“After coming to know about the incident, our main focus was on the treatment of the injured. Based on the statement of those injured, and findings by the experts we will come to know more about the incident. We will be taking further action based on that. As of now, we know that there was a leak of ammonia gas that is used in cold storages. The death was caused by the inhalation of the same. There were four labourers present on the premises at the time of the incident and they came in contact [with the gas],”