Working with Dangerous Goods – Safe Storage Fatality File

Two employees sustain respiratory irritation, chest pain, and skin irritation

At 11:00 a.m. on May 5, 2017, an employee was transporting two pallets from the dangerous goods storage area at the rear of the WFS warehouse to door #3 on the loading dock for pick-up by DHL. Each pallet contained four 50 kg metal drums of origanum oil. Origanum oil is a corrosive chemical used as a food additive. When the employee arrived with the second pallet, the DHL courier who was picking up the drums alerted the employee that oil was leaking from a drum. The WFS supervisor was notified, who in turn notified other supervisors. The assistant general manager responded.

Employees from WFS, DHL and a driver from MRZ Trucking were instructed to leave the area of the spill. The assistant general manager checked the UN number of the chemical, consulted the Emergency Response Guidebook, and retrieved a spill kit to try to contain the spillage. PAPD arrived to take control of the situation with EMTs. The Pennsylvania environmental response team arrived later.

PAPD asked the general manager to guard the area to keep other employees away. The assistant general manager was positioned about 10 feet from the spill with little ventilation. The building doors were closed due to airport security reasons. The building was a large open warehouse.

The building was evacuated. Eight people were examined by EMTs. Some people received supplementary oxygen. The general manager and a warehouse agent were taken to Jamaica Hospital for treatment and released later the same day. The two employee sustained respiratory irritation, chest pain, and skin irritation.

Source: osha.gov/