

## Last Week's Haz-Mat Incident in Smithfield

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On Wednesday, February 19, 2014, a hazardous materials incident occurred at 2233 WalPat Road in Smithfield, NC. Workers reported the medium-sized release of an unknown gas, yellow-green in color, from a 150 pound pressurized cylinder at a metal recycle plant.

Smithfield Fire Department and Johnston County EMS were among the initially dispatched agencies. Upon arrival, crews found that a heavy equipment operator had damaged a pressurized gas cylinder that was located among other scrap metal debris.

One worker experienced difficulty breathing and vomiting, and was transported by ambulance to WakeMed. Three other workers were transported to Johnston Health by private vehicles.

Johnson County Emergency Management also respond. They suspected the gas was chlorine, due to the color and smell. The county EM representatives contacted the state Emergency Management office to request a regional haz-mat team response from Raleigh.

A conference call was placed between NC EM, JC EM, Raleigh Fire Department Battalion 3 (the haz-mat Battalion Chief), and the Regional Response Team 4 Officer. They determined that a level three response was most appropriate, sending three RRT units with twelve haz-mat technicians to the scene.



*Jason Thompson/JocoFire photo*

Responding units from the Raleigh Fire Department were Haz-Mat 2 (from Station 27, staffed by Engine 27), Haz-Mat 3 (recon unit from Station 8, staffed by Engine 8), Haz-Mat 4 (decon unit from Station 22, staffed by Ladder 5), and Car 55 (team leader). Driving distance to the scene for units varied between 30 and 40 miles.

After the arrival of Haz-Mat 3 and Car 55, the Haz-Mat Branch of the operation was established. Smithfield Fire Department was the Incident Commander.

Crews made an initial entry for reconnaissance, to determine cylinder location, take pictures of the scene and monitor the atmosphere to determine the presence and amount of chlorine gas.

As entry was being prepared, Haz-Mat 4 arrived. A site safety plan was written and a pre-entry briefing was carried out. The resulting reconnaissance entry report confirmed that a 150-pound gas cylinder had been damaged and was leaking small amounts of gas.

Crews made a second entry using Level "B" personal protective equipment with self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). They successfully placed a dome cover over the cylinder's broken valve, which contained the leak.



Jason Thompson/JocoFire photo

During each entry of each two-person entry team, a second two-person stood ready as back-up, in the event the entry team needed rescue.

After containing the leak, the area around the cylinder was taped off and an environmental clean-up company was contacted by the facility to pick up the damaged cylinder. All units were demobilized and a post-incident briefing was held by the RRT 4 office.

Incident release forms were signed and the scene was turned over to the business representative.

[See more photos](#) from Jason Thompson. Other links: [JocoFire.com](#) (scroll down page), [WTVD](#), [WBTV](#).

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Responding units also included Smithfield E1, E2, R2 with special ops trailer, Car 1; JCEMS 92, 91, Medic 1, EMS3, FM2, FM3.

**BW** - 03/02/14 - 23:14

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