



FUELS INDUSTRY
Association of South Africa

LEARNING FROM INCIDENT

FIREFIGHTING FOAM CONCENTRATE WASHED INTO THE BLINDE RIVER

2024



FIREFIGHTING FOAM CONCENTRATE WASHED INTO THE BLINDE RIVER

Background

About 71 m³ of the ALCOSEAL foam concentrate material leaked into the storm water sewer for 9 nine days unnoticed, left the facility and spilled into the Blinde River. During the heavy rainfall, the fluffy foam was observed lifting up from the storm water sewers. The nearby farmer along the Blinde river called in reporting high volume of the fluffy foam flying across his residential from the river. Company emergency services promptly initiated response actions to contain and mitigate the release.





INCIDENT ROOT CAUSE

Firewater impairment:

- The foam leak originated from the underground piping near the excavation for firewater impairment repairs. High number of leaks in the firewater main ring had prevented the functional testing of both the firewater pumps and foam pumps resulting in lack of routine circulation of the system leading to product deposits causing internal corrosion attack on piping.



Violation of routine inspections procedure:

- Complacency by Operators in the failure to conduct routine inspections of the plant and fire protection system indicated a decline in safety culture and vigilance.



INCIDENT LEARNINGS

- Delayed impairment repairs of the fire protection systems created the complacency of risks to be overlooked.
- Prompt response actions to contain and mitigate the release together with 5 days clean up process resulted in no contamination of drinking water or loss of aquatic life was reported.
- Lapses in judgment by Operators: Foster a culture that prioritizes understanding hazards and evaluating risks



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Thank You

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