

# Three Critically Injured in Refinery Fire

BOB MOEN, Associated Press

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — The initial investigation into a flash fire that critically injured three workers at the Sinclair oil refinery near Rawlins found that the workers were wearing special fire resistant clothing, but details on what might have caused the fire aren't yet available.

The state Occupational Safety and Health Administration is investigating Tuesday's fire at the Sinclair Oil Corp. refinery, about five miles east of Rawlins.

Hayley Douglass, spokeswoman for the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, said two OSHA investigators are looking into the fire.

"The investigation is still ongoing, and we expect it to continue through Monday," Douglass said.

Sinclair said the flash fire happened inside a gas recovery unit at its refinery, about five miles east of Rawlins. Several fires occurred at the refinery last year, and while no injuries were reported, some interrupted refinery operations.

The Rawlins Daily Times identified two of the three critically injured workers as Tim Bjork and Eric Hansen.

Bjork, Hansen and another unidentified worker were being treated at the North Colorado Medical Center's Western States Burn Center in Greeley, Colo., according to spokesman Gene Haffner.

Haffner said Bjork and Hansen remained in critical condition Wednesday, but he could not divulge any specifics about their injuries and treatment.

A fourth worker was treated and released from Memorial Hospital of Carbon County in Rawlins on Tuesday.

Salt Lake City-based Sinclair has released no information about the victims other than to say its chief concern is for their welfare.

A statement from the company said the fire occurred in a gas recovery unit, which separates a gas mixture into various fuels, including propane, butane and gasoline.

The company said there appeared to be little or no damage to the facility although the gas recovery unit involved has been shut down during the investigation.

Wyoming consistently ranks among the worst states for fatal workplace accidents. Last August, three workers at an oil facility near Casper were killed in an explosion.

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Earlier this year, the state Legislature authorized the Workforce Services Department to hire more people to help businesses identify and correct safety issues.

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*Information from: Rawlins (Wyo.) Daily Times, <http://www.rawlinstimes.com> [1].*

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