Five Still In Intensive Care After Tyson Toxic Spill

SPRINGDALE, Arkansas (AP) — Five workers exposed to chlorine gas at a Tyson Foods Inc. chicken processing plant are in intensive care and about 50 others remain hospitalized after an accident caused by the unintentional mixing of two chemicals, the company said Tuesday.

The accident Monday at the plant in Springdale resulted in the evacuation of about 300 workers, 173 of whom were treated at hospitals. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, chlorine gas can cause a range of respiratory problems, from irritated tissue to sudden death from narrowing of the upper airway.

The company reported Monday that 45 workers were hospitalized and that none of the injuries from the potentially deadly gas were life-threatening. But on Tuesday it said five of its workers were in intensive care and that it had set up a clinic staffed with a doctor and nurses at the plant for workers to receive continued treatment.

Company spokesman Gary Mickelson said the discrepancy occurred because some patients had not yet been evaluated when the company released the Monday numbers.

"It was an evolving process yesterday," Mickelson said Tuesday.

Human error played a role in the accidental mixing of two chemicals that created the gas as a byproduct of a chemical reaction, said Donnie King, Tyson Foods' senior group vice president of poultry and prepared foods.

The company declined to say which two chemicals were mixed, but Mickelson said the plant does not use chlorine gas.

Chlorine is commonly used as an antimicrobial treatment in chicken production.

Mickelson said the company is investigating the accident and won't discuss its findings until the investigation concludes.

Sudden exposure to chlorine gas can bring on coughing and choking spasms, severe chest discomfort, vomiting and other symptoms, and in severe cases, the lungs can fill with fluid, according to the CDC.

Source URL (retrieved on *10/01/2014 - 7:19pm*):
http://www.impomag.com/news/2011/06/five-still-intensive-care-after-tyson-toxic-spill?qt-recent_content=1