

Spectra gas incident . . .

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and New Jersey Resources, said that natural gas had been emitted from the station as a result of the releasing of pressure from the plant.

DEP spokeswoman Lisa Kasianowitz said Wednesday in an e-mail Spectra changed its Monday assessment of what was coming from the station.

"It was actually natural gas that was being emitted when the relief valve popped off. As you probably already know, natural gas is composed of 95 percent methane and the other 5 percent is hydrocarbons," she said.

Another Spectra spokeswoman, Andrea D. Grover, added via an e-mail Thursday that a "small pressure relief valve was activated when the valve detected a higher than normal pressure in that section of the station." The valve opened to relieve a "small volume of natural gas."

"However there was no smoke; residents may have seen the natural gas being vented," Grover said.

Grover didn't respond when asked twice via e-mail whether the company could tell how much natural gas was emitted.

Though Hanley couldn't explain what the popping, snapping and firecracker-like noise was that residents heard and caught on video, Grover said, "We understand there may have been some noise."

The explanation, now changed from air to natural gas, didn't sit well with Michele Beegle of Monroe Township. She lives less than

a half-mile from the compressor station that she has claimed has contributed to illnesses for her and her family.

She clearly voiced her frustration.

"It just goes to show you how they are lying," she said. "I don't believe a word they say, the company or DEP."

Saturday evening, Beegle noticed her mouth was extremely dry and blamed it on the compressor station.

Angel Smith, Beegle's neighbor, said she wanted to know why the pressure built up and how the valve "popped off."

"Methane and hydrocarbons are dangerous. Why would DEP not show up or come out? Why wouldn't Spectra tell residents the next day?" Smith wondered. Hydrocarbons can cause fatigue headaches, and if exposed long-term, damage to the central nervous system, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Methane can cause breathing, dizziness, nausea and worse in cases of direct exposure as in coal mining.

Kasianowitz noted that the compressor station is permitted by law to emit a certain amount of pollutants:

—50 tons of volatile organic compounds (example, benzene, toluene, trichloroethylene);

—25 tons in total of hazardous air pollutants. Dozens of these chemicals are listed by EPA (Acetamide from xylenes);

—10 tons of a single hazardous pollutant, though the spokeswoman said the plant hasn't reported emitting that much of any one of these.

Glover said had there been a

need, Spectra would have informed residents.

"Spectra Energy is committed to the safety of our workers and the community. Should there have been any sort of reason for concern, we would have absolutely contacted nearby landowners," her e-mail said.

Smith bristled at the manner in which the complaint was handled by both DEP and the company.

On Tuesday, Robert Conrad, assistant regional director for DEP's Southcentral Regional Office, was asked by Smith via e-mail whether any chemicals were released.

"That question was also asked by our Air Quality supervisor and they confirmed that no chemicals were involved," he told Smith.

Grover didn't respond to the question of whether the staff that responded to the scene Saturday night knew the natural gas and related methane and hydrocarbons were escaping.

"Three hours constantly spitting out natural gas. And (they) don't see a problem with this?" Smith said. "Gee, I'm breathing it, neighbors are breathing this and this is OK?"

Woman ple

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McConoughey was originally charged as an adult but his case was transferred to juvenile court in October.

According to the state police affidavit, Bonner told police her son has been carrying a handgun for about a year and

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