

NDK must disclose possible pollutants from blast by Jan. 30

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RRSTAR.COM

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BELVIDERE — NDK Crystal officials must disclose by Jan. 30 which chemicals may have polluted the water, soil and air after a Dec. 7 explosion at the Belvidere plant.

And within 60 days, the company must provide a corrective action plan, hazard and operability study, and a “root cause analysis” of what triggered the disaster. The company could face fines of \$500 a day or more if the information isn’t submitted on time, according to an agreed order among NDK, the Boone County state’s attorney’s office and the Illinois attorney general’s office.

The order was filed Wednesday in circuit court. It also serves as a preliminary injunction — essentially prohibiting any production at the crystal manufacturing facility.

“This is an agreed order, this puts into place some specific dates they need to comply with,” said Scott Mulford, a spokesman for state attorney general’s office. “In the event NDK fails to perform as per this agreed order, there are penalties. It is a clause to encourage NDK to comply with the terms they signed off on themselves.”

NDK’s \$12.5 million, 55,000-square-foot building, visible from Interstate 90, opened in 2003. Inside are several 50-foot-tall, 75-ton autoclave vessels in which synthetic quartz crystal is grown. Debris from the Dec. 7 explosion killed a truck driver who was at the Belvidere Oasis, about 400 feet from the plant.

The 12-page order specifies further deadlines by which NDK must provide “its best estimate” of the chemicals emitted from the site, provide identities and quantities of materials and chemical mixtures in its remaining “autoclave” vessels in which crystals are manufactured, and provide a written plan of action to ensure remaining chemicals don’t pose harm to humans or the environment.

A written description of the company’s crystal production process is also required, including a list of all chemicals used in the process and the identity and volume of all chemicals stored on site during normal plant operations.

Boone County State’s Attorney Michelle Courier said the company has been cooperative with the demands. She and representatives from the Illinois attorney general’s office filed a two-count complaint Dec. 31 against NDK, saying the company posed environmental and health hazards when the explosion sent a cloud of quartz particles over the area.

When inhaled, “fine quartz particles can trigger serious respiratory ailments, including silicosis,” according to the complaint.

The lawsuit was filed partially as a result of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency’s Dec. 22 referral of the case to Attorney General Lisa Madigan’s office. The IEPA sought to force NDK Crystal to disclose soon after the explosion what chemicals from may have polluted the soil, air and water.

The company is “fully cooperating” with both offices, NDK Crystal attorney Gary Vist told the Register Star this month. Vist is traveling outside the U.S. and could not be reached for comment today.

Reach staff writer Betsy López Fritscher at bfritsch@rrstar.com or 815-544-3452.

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robflyguy
14 hours ago

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Funny, that if you put a backyard fence up improperly, that the fine per day is exactly the same. What a complete joke.

freybear
7 hours ago

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Sounds like they are hiding something they werent suppose to be doing at the plant.

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FreedomLover

4 hours ago

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This all appears to be standard protocol given the magnatude of the incident. I would not be surprised if they find that everything from a chemical standpoint was on the up and up. The big issues in my mind are getting to the root cause of what caused the explosion, and what steps are being taken to 1) avoid another incident, and 2) what design changes will be made so that if another incident were to occur, debris cannot be spewed several hundred feet in all directions. If they do not come up with a barrier wall or put the reactors beneath the ground, they should not be allowed to resume manufacturing.

DanielRobertSmyth

57 minutes ago

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The explosion went UP and OUT!

No water around!

Check the wind!

EVERYTHING is all in the MSDS. Ask someone to read it to you!

(not directed at anyone)

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