

NDK hopes some employees can return to work next week

Investigations continue at site of the Monday explosion that killed one.

By **Betsy Lopez Fritscher**

RRSTAR.COM

Posted Dec 09, 2009 @ 02:08 PM

Last update Dec 10, 2009 @ 03:02 PM

BELVIDERE — Some NDK workers may return to their jobs at the Belvidere plant as early as next week, company officials said today.

They'll be joined — perhaps for months — by investigators from state and federal agencies who are investigating the cause of an explosion Monday that blew out the west side of the Crystal Parkway building and left a 63-year-old Indiana man dead.

NDK Crystal attorney Gary Vist said the company is committed to the investigation and its employees. The NDK facility at 701 Crystal Parkway houses NDK Crystal and NDK America Inc. and serves as the North American headquarters for their Japan-based parent company. The portion of the building that houses NDK Crystal suffered the bulk of the damage from the explosion.

“The (NDK America) sales side will hopefully be able to get going in the next few days, depending on what the city is suggesting after a structural assessment of the building,” he said. “That side, the company really hopes, will be up and running in the next few days. As far as NDK Crystal, it's unknown when they can go back to work.”

Waiting for several on-site investigations to wrap up is also keeping workers from returning to work, Vist said.

“The U.S. Chemical Safety Board is there, and until an investigation is complete that side is going to be out for awhile,” he said.

“This is most likely not going to be a very quick thing, but that depends on how you define quick. I know that the CSB has been gracious and helpful, and their goal and everyone else's is to go through this as quickly as possible, but as thorough as possible.”

A few agencies are done

An investigator with the Department of Homeland Security has finished an inspection of the NDK plant, but it is unknown whether any chemicals of concern were noted.

The Belvidere Fire Department and the Illinois State Fire Marshall's office also have completed their portion of on-site investigations and continue to study what factors led to the blast. Inspectors from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration are also examining whether safety and health requirements were met at the plant.

A team from the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board is leading the multipronged investigation. It is looking into what chemicals were involved in the blast and whether the Clean Air Act was violated. Members of the board met NDK officials today and got acquainted with the site, said board spokeswoman Amy McCormick.

“After the emergency responders are done with their site investigation, we take control of the site,” McCormick said. “We conduct our own independent investigation, so anything that we do is independent of what the other departments have already done.”

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency is also looking for signs of pollution in the wake of the blast.

“Obviously when there is something like this, there is runoff of water and there will be some disposal issues that will have to be dealt with,” said IEPA Communication Manager Maggie Carson.

“It's still in an emergency phase. We are there to ensure all actions taken protect air, land and water. We are there monitoring at the structure and will maintain a presence out there to see what cleanups may be (needed).”

Around the clock guard

The NDK plant is being guarded around the clock by local law enforcement, though company officials intend to pay for security at the site in short order. It's unknown whether NDK will pay or reimburse local law enforcement or hire private security.

Crystal Parkway between Sager Avenue and Tripp Road remains blocked off, said Boone County Emergency Management Director Sandra Rogers.

Staff writer *Betsy Lopez Fritscher* can be reached at bfritsch@rrstar.com or 815-544-3452.

Comments (7)

brownp15

5 days ago

Report Abuse

You must be logged in to report abuse.

Report Abuse

The NDK plant is NOT a supplier to the Chrysler Belvidere plant.....once again the RRSTAR has failed to get it's facts straight.....Grupo Antolin, NDK's next door neighbor is a supplier to The Chrysler Plant..

brownp15
5 days ago
Report Abuse
You must be logged in to report abuse.

also ...the explosion did not blow 'one side of the building out' ...it blew ALL the sides of the building out.. Where do you guys get your reporters from?
BLFritscher1
5 days ago
Report Abuse
You must be logged in to report abuse.

As always, thanks for writing. Brownp15, please note, research was done and we confirmed this information with an official at Chrysler that NDK is a supplier. Here is a link to NDK's automotive arm: <http://www.ndk.com/en/products/purpose/car/index.html>.

All the best.
Observe
4 days ago
Report Abuse
You must be logged in to report abuse.

Only one of brownp15's points have been addressed. The statement, 'that blew out the west side of the Crystal Parkway building' is not accurate as evidenced by the picture to the left. I would not be able to see the night sky through the steel framework if only 'the west side' was blown out. This error is glaring.

beihak
4 days ago
Report Abuse
You must be logged in to report abuse.

Observe/brownp15 - Actually if you look at the overall building only the Tower is blown out. The tower is the west side of the building there is a significant 1-2 story portion not shown in most of the photographs which is connected to the eastern side of the tower. This story is factually correct.

BLFritscher1
4 days ago
Report Abuse
You must be logged in to report abuse.

RRS readers -- Our Belvidere Chrysler plant official contact believed the plant was supplied by NDK's automotive crystal division as of yesterday, but has since learned otherwise. He wrote to us earlier today and we are updating the story to keep it accurate. NDK does supply automotive groups, just not to the one here.

As for photos, check back to this story for other angles of the NDK site. A link to a photo gallery will be posted.

All the best,
Betsy Lopez Fritscher | Rockford Register Star
Observe
4 days ago
Report Abuse
You must be [logged in](#) to report abuse.

The tower is an attached part of the building and has multiple sides. Actually, the damaged factory part is at the west *end* of the building.
Login or register to post a comment:

Login

Username:

Password:

Forgot password

Register

Email:

First Name:

Last Name:

I agree to the terms of use

I am over 13 years of age

NOTE: Your inbox must accept emails from "no-reply@gatehousemedia.com"



[Contact us](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#)

Rockford Register Star | 99 E. State St. Rockford, IL 61104

Copyright © 2006–2009 GateHouse Media, Inc. Some Rights Reserved.

Original content available for non-commercial use under a [Creative Commons](#) license, except where noted.

SEO by [eLocalListing](#) | [Advertiser profiles](#) | [Cherrp Local](#)