

## NDK blast investigation to take '6 months to a year'

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BELVIDERE — U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board investigators have begun the analysis phase of their investigation into what caused a Dec. 7 explosion at the Crystal Parkway NDK plant that left one man dead.

John Vorderbrueggen, investigations supervisor, William Wark, Chemical Safety Board member, and others from the group left the plant at 701 Crystal Parkway Sunday and are back at the agency's Washington D.C. headquarters, said Amy M. McCormick, U.S. Chemical Safety Board affairs specialist. The team anticipates its original timeline of up to two years to finish the probe is no longer likely, she said.

"In this case, it will most likely be 6 months to a year," McCormick said. "We don't believe it will take as long as it normally would, there is no fire damage. At this point, there are no scheduled plans to return to the site. However, if additional equipment testing is needed, the team may return."

Planning began late last week to provide alternate working space for NDK Crystal employees, said Ken Hennessy, the company's acting president. The company resumed operations this week, but officials still don't know how soon the employees can move back to the Belvidere plant.

"Our operations are running out of temporary offices," Hennessy said. "Shipping and receiving is being handled close to O'Hare Airport and the administrative side is in temporary facility. It's going to be a while until some of the sales and administration (activity) occurs out of Belvidere."

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 vessels in which synthetic quartz crystal is grown.

The crystal is used to make frequency-control devices, which NDK sells to mobile telephone makers, automotive groups and others for use in electronic devices.

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