CHEMICAL PLANT

Damage Up To $10 Million

LAPLACE, La. (AP) — The manager of the Du Pont chemical plant near LaPlace estimates damage at between $1 million and $10 million from an explosion and fire that injured 21 workers, six critically.

William D. Cobb said Wednesday the accident destroyed two storage tanks, and workers were still cleaning up liquid chemicals which were released.

He said the explosion probably was caused when one of the storage tanks clogged and trapped chlorophene.

"The vessel apparently became plugged and the material overheated, which caused a rupture to the container and this, of course, released a vapor cloud which we think ignited," he said.

"It is a very flammable liquid, much like gasoline," he said.

"At the time of the rupture, we recognized a plugging problem and were in the process of cleaning the system when the thing went off," Cobb said.

The chemical is used to make synthetic rubber, one of the main products of the Pontchartrain Works plant.

"The people who were the most severely injured were..."