



L2 Environmental Incident: **DIGESTATE SPILL**

Number	2022-16	Date	07.12.2022
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Summary:

A spill of c. 10m3 of liquid digestate occurred at an operating biogas plant, covering an area of asphalt and compacted gravel within the Plant boundary. The digestate was in its 'final' form as a product to be used offsite for fertiliser.

The incident occurred at the weekend during balancing of tanks which was being controlled remotely. During the tank balancing, a spill occurred as the manual valve to the temporary loading point (near the tanks) had been left open in error. The temporary loading point was required as maintenance was taking place on the digestate storage tank affecting the normally loading operation..

Outcome:

The spill and all associated contaminated material was removed from site.

Incident Classification: L2 Environmental Incident



Root Causes and Contributory Factors

Root causes:

- Maintenance activity and its impact on operations not assessed correctly through Risk Assessment Method Statement Process (RAMS)
- Not following Site HSE Plan

Contributory factor:

- Operative rushing due to time of last tanker loading and workload
- Lack of clarify in division of responsibility in terms of RAMs between Operations and Maintenance Team Leads
- No control system on manual valve so that its status could be understood remotely

Lesson Learned

- Ensure RAMS process is followed for future changes in operations / maintenance projects
- Review HSE Resources / Support on site for development of RAMS
- Ensure that Point of Work Risk Assessment is used before every non routine working activity
- Clarify boundary between maintenance and operations (during SimOps) and ensure RAMS is signed by both parties
- Where plant are designed to run unattended, in future projects consider additional measures to make it inherently safe e.g. additional containment around process areas and reducing gravel area in proximity to tanks, additional alarms.



Every Lesson Learned is an opportunity to avoid recurrences.
What have you done to avoid a similar incident on your project?

