

(b) (4)

INCIDENT DESCRIPTION

This incident description is primarily based on employee interviews. Those interviewed indicated that at two separate times before the incident, at times between 0830 and 0930, two booms were heard from the FCCU Control Room. The source of the first boom could not be determined until later but dust was observed coming off a pipe rack near the control room after the boom occurred. The source of the second boom was from a line to the flare located in the pipe rack. The flare was also observed to light off at approximately 0930 (the approximate time of the second boom).⁵ There was a limited search for the cause after the second boom, but the exact cause of the boom and of the flare lighting off was not determined and shutdown continued, which is surprising to the inspection team.

At approximately 1000 on April 26, 2018 most of the workers at the refinery were on break in various break areas, but a few contractors and a few Superior Refining Company employees were still in the general GCU area, when both the Primary and Sponge Absorbers exploded almost simultaneously.⁶ The explosion knocked several workers in the area to the ground. One worker noted that while he was on the ground he looked up and saw a flash blow over him.⁷

⁵ See (b)7(C) dated 5/1/2018, and (b)7(C) dated 5/2/2018.

⁶ Most workers described the explosion as one big boom but a few described it as two booms almost occurring at the same time.

⁷ See (b)7(C) dated 5/2/2018.