

CP Chem post-Harvey inspections continue, no timeline for restart

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Chevron Phillips Chemical's Cedar Bayou petrochemical complex remained offline on Thursday as post-Harvey infrastructure assessments continued, a spokeswoman said.

It was unclear when the facility will resume operations, spokeswoman Kristina Baum said.

While most other petrochemical plants along the Texas Coast shut for Harvey have restarted or initiated restart, emergency and assessment crews are gauging safety of structures and systems at CP Chem's facility, clearing buildings for recovery and restoration crews as inspections allow, spokeswoman Baum said in an email.

According to the National Weather Service, one of its gauges north of CP Chem's complex east of Houston recorded 51.88 inches of rain as of August 29 -- the highest single amount seen from the wettest storm ever in the Lower 48 states. Other gauges from Galveston to Beaumont registered amounts in the range of 22-49 inches.

The complex has an 835,000 mt/year cracker and 842,330 mt/year of polyethylene capacity. Union Pacific and BNSF Railway also had embargoes in place on Thursday barring rail traffic at Eldon, just east of CP Chem's complex, because of flooding.

"At this point, it is too early to accurately assess when we will initiate startup activities," Baum said.

Among other plants, Shell Deer Park, which has an 836,000 mt/year cracker at its chemical complex, had no update beyond its transition to restart nearly a week ago, a spokesman said in an email Thursday. ExxonMobil continued ramping up production at its chemical plants in Baytown and Beaumont, which have 2.1 million mt/year and 827,000 mt/year of ethylene capacity, respectively, a spokesman said in an email.

And DuPont was ramping up its 680,000 cracker at its complex in Orange, Texas, near the Louisiana state line, on Thursday, Mike Hiteshew, global digital marketing leader, said in an email.

Phillips 66 CEO Greg Garland told investors last week that Harvey left five to eight feet of water in different parts of the Cedar Bayou facility. The complex has an 835,000 mt/year cracker and 842,330 mt/year of polyethylene capacity.

Garland said a new 1.5 million mt/year cracker under construction at the site did not get as much water, but contractors had been off work for two weeks and the company needed to round up those crews to resume work. He said the the company hoped to finish construction by the end of the year, pushing initial startup to the first quarter of 2018.