



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Beaufort Fire Department checks gas leak at TCL

Beaufort firefighters cleaned up a battery leak that sent two Technical College of the Lowcountry employees to the emergency room for observation Monday morning.

One or more batteries in the welding shop at TCL apparently released potentially dangerous hydrogen cyanide and carbon monoxide in a closet containing a bank of batteries used for the wind turbine, according to Beaufort Fire Chief Sammy Negron.

“Dispatch received a call at 7:01 a.m. of an odor coming from a building at TCL that could be a possible gas leak. Their security could smell the gases from outside the building,” Negron said.

Squad 1 from the Beaufort Fire Department responded within minutes and, after meeting with TCL security and maintenance workers, found no evidence of explosive gases.

“However, our air monitoring equipment did detect hydrogen cyanide and carbon monoxide in a closet of the welding shop,” Negron said. “Our firefighters isolated the batteries and removed them. We ventilated the affected building until all readings were back to normal. Once the ventilation was complete and the hazard removed, the building was released to be re-occupied.”

Negron said ER doctors reported they would keep the two TCL employees under observation for a few hours but expected to release them by mid-day Monday. No update was available by 5 p.m., Negron said.

He applauded the quick reaction of TCL employees in alerting the fire department of the possible gas leak.

“Early detection and calling the Fire Department helped keep this a minor incident,” Negron said. “These are potentially dangerous gases in high levels. We encourage people to always err on the side of caution and call us if they think there’s a gas leak or other potential danger.”

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