

Edmonton

## Canadian Natural Resources fined \$500,000 for hydrogen sulphide releases

University of Calgary researchers to benefit from CNRL fines

CBC News · Posted: Jun 24, 2016 6:25 PM MT | Last Updated: June 25, 2016



The CNRL Horizon oilsands project is 15 kilometres north of Fort McKay (Terry Reith/CBC)

Canadian Natural Resources Limited (CNRL) has been fined \$500,000 for two unrelated incidents involving the release of poisonous hydrogen sulphide from its Horizon oilsands facility.

The camp — about 70 kilometres north of Fort McMurray — breached the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act on May 28, 2010, when the plant's sulphur recovery unit failed, allowing hydrogen sulphide to escape at ground level and through a flare stack.

- [Oilsands company fined \\$1.5M in Chinese workers' deaths](#)
- [Oilsands giant CNRL charged in 2nd sour gas leak](#)

The gas, which smell of rotten eggs, is highly poisonous, corrosive, flammable, and explosive.

The company didn't report the failure for nearly a month, even though it was required to report it immediately. The violation cost CNRL \$350,000.

In an unrelated incident, on Aug. 2, 2012, the sulphur recovery unit failed again, releasing an unknown amount of hydrogen sulphide gas into the air when it wasn't fully combusted.

Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) began investigating after receiving reports of high air monitoring readings in the area and complaints from people in Fort MacKay.

The company was charged for the leak, failing to report the incident and provided misleading information to the government and the Fort MacKay First Nation.

Each charge carried a possible fine of \$500,000.

The company was found guilty only of contravening the conditions of the plant's approval and was fined \$150,000 after admitting to the incident.

The rest of the charges were dismissed or withdrawn.

Researchers at the University of Calgary will receive \$425,000 from the penalties to study the toxicological effects of chemicals in the air in and around Fort MacKay.

The rest of the fines will go to the regulator.

[CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices](#) | [About CBC News](#)

[Report Typo or Error](#) | [Send Feedback](#)

## RELATED STORIES

---

- [Métis accuse oilsands giant CNRL of economic retaliation over environmental concerns](#)
- [Canadian Natural Resources barrels ahead with Horizon oilsands expansion](#)
- [Oilsands giant CNRL charged in 2nd sour gas leak](#)

## Connect with us

---

**with CBC & CBC**

Audience

Relations,

[Facebook](#)

[CBC](#)

[Corporate](#)

It is a priority for CBC to create a website that is accessible to all Canadians including people with visual, hearing, motor and cognitive challenges.

Closed Captioning and Described Video is available for many CBC-TV shows offered on [CBC](#)

[CBC](#)

[Twitter](#) [P.O. Box 500](#) [Info](#)  
[YouTube](#) [Station A](#) [Ombudsman](#) [More about CBC Accessibility](#)  
[Instagram](#) [Toronto, ON](#) [Public](#) [Accessibility Feedback](#)  
[Mobile](#) [Canada](#) [Appearances](#)  
[RSS](#) [M5W 1E6](#) [Commercial Services](#)  
[Podcasts](#) [Reuse & Permission](#)  
[Newsletters](#) [Terms of Use](#)  
[Toll-free \(Canada only\): 1-866-306-4636](#) [Privacy](#)  
[TTY/Teletype writer: 1-866-220-6045](#) [CBC Shop](#)  
[FAQ](#) [Doing Business with Us](#) [Renting Facilities](#)  
[Help Centre](#) [Independent Producers](#) [Sitemap](#)  
[✉](#) [Contact Us](#)