

Rancho Santa Margarita Plant Explosion Kills Two Workers and Injures Two Others

In Orange County, California, investigators are trying to determine what caused an electric heater at a Rancho Santa Margarita plastics manufacturing plant to explode. The March 19, 2009 work blast killed two workers and injured two other night shift employees.

The force of the blast blew out a concrete wall in the plant and caused the water heater to soar through the roof of Solus Industrial Innovations. Damage to the building and its contents was estimated at \$1.5 million, said Capt. Greg McKeown, a spokesman for the Orange County Fire Authority.

The blast was so powerful that it cracked the building's concrete walls and sent it soaring through the roof. The two workers that died are 51-year-old Garden Grover resident Jose Jimenez and 34-year-old Oceanside resident Isidro Echeverria. Two other workers were taken to Mission Hospital with minor injuries, McKeown said

According to the California Department of Industrial Relations, water heater blasts in industrial settings are not that common. The standard residential-type water heater that exploded was being used for industrial purposes. While the building's yearly fire inspection was current, the water heater may not have been part of the safety check.

