



Explosion on U.S. Route 491 results in evacuation of Naschitti

NASCHITTI, N.M.—Residents of Naschitti were evacuated after a semi-tractor trailer hauling hazardous materials crashed early this morning and caught fire.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly encourages residents to stay away from the accident site and follow instructions provided by first responders.

“Please avoid the accident area and follow instructions to stay away from the accident site until the hazardous materials have been cleaned up,” President Shelly said. “Our Navajo Nation emergency personnel are currently onsite.”

Rose Whitehair, director of the Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management, said the explosion occurred around 6:40 a.m. near milepost 43 in Naschitti.

“For your safety, stay upwind and away from the smoke,” Whitehair said. “The more distance between you and the source of the smoke, the better.”

Temporary evacuation shelters are being mobilized at Tohatchi Chapter and Newcomb Chapter. The public is encouraged to keep home doors and windows closed.

Additionally, the NNDEM is recommends not to utilize air conditioners, ventilation fans and other air intake systems. The traveling public is encouraged to keep vehicle windows and vents closed, or use of recirculating air when traveling near the accident site.

If any symptoms of difficulty breathing, irritation of eyes, skin, throat, or respiratory tract occur, seek immediate medical attention. Other symptoms include changes in skin color, headaches, blurred vision, dizziness, cramps and diarrhea.

The Emergency Operations Center is currently coordinating efforts with the Navajo Division of Public Safety, Department of Emergency Medical Services and the Fire Department.

Information: 505-371-8145.

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